My Own Philosophy

Werner Eggerth

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MY OWN PHILOSOPHY

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MY OWN PHILOSOPHY

AND OTHER POEMS AND DRAMAS

BY

WERNER EGGERTH

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TO

CLEMENTINE

MY KIND WIFE, AND FAITHFUL HELPER.

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PROLOGUE

Each takes the wealth he finds to store and keep
Which doth appeal to his own taste and bent,
And gives in life's turmoil and endless strife
What he accumulates and well can spare.
The lover seeks for love, returning all
E'er finding more, again his store to swell —
And he who straining, toils with hand and head,
While carving patiently the lifeless stone
Returneth all improved, if he his task
Doth understand, and knows his craft by heart.

The poet, too, doth try to sate each day
The craving of his hungry soul and mind,
And stooping low in search for spoils and gain
Which, overlooked by others, are his prey —
And reaching high, outspeeding sound and light,
O'erleaping chasms which would awe, appall,
His less discerning brothers in their trend,
He taketh in, to hold and to digest
And to return, in shape more apt to please,
To those who fail to see the cause of things
Which they do fear, admire — not understand —
He fills his heart, his soul, his weighing mind
With things which no one else appears to see,
And throes he feels, while moulding into shape
His fitful and evasive thoughts, which come
And go at will; and which, if not at once
Retained like fortune's gifts, will flee and fade
Ne'er to return. These throes proportioned are
With the results, the products of his mind.

The Poet gives, but what he is and has —
He gives his mind unveiled, disclosed, revealed —
Gives each impulse he felt, and thought he grasped,
And plainly shows each change he underwent
In course of time, amid most searching pain.
His secrets are not his — to God, the world,
The elements he speaks, returning that
Which all gave him, and he cannot retain.

HUMOROUS POEMS

THE PASSING OF THE DOLLAR

[An alleged discovery that life could be prolonged through the injection of a fluid from the lymphatic glands of a goat, prompted the following lines.]

Not "dollars" but "goats," be the watchword hereafter;
Not wealth nor possessions less potent will count.
The bandit, sharp-witted, with scorn-tinted laughter,
Rejecting gold's glitter, doth wisdom's perch mount.

"Your life or your goat!" is the war cry he utters,
While springing at you like a chick at a worm —
And the kidnaper, too, derisively mutters:
"The kid of the biped is a fraud, I affirm!"

"Hereafter, I'll nab but the genuine goaties,
The urchins of Billy, the hope of my clan.
I pledge myself herewith, and duly give notice:
I'll gather them up, just as fast as I can."

The Bank will hereafter of locks show no traces,
And still be secure, unless — lucky fate —
Perchance it doth harbor, within its arched spaces,
A voucher of Billy, or a deed to his mate.

Not kingdoms, but goats, doth the monarch require —
And the poor cotter's fancy doth covet a pair.—
"Goats" is the one thing to which all aspire —
And he, thus equipped, is a Billionaire. (Billy-owner.)

The aim of the humble was e'er bread and butter,
  Since Adam got fooled by the reptile so vile.
But now the ambition of each wily blotter,
  Is the "Butter" alone, for to make up his pile.

And Nanny, the Buttress, in more than one meaning,
  Will rise in esteem, as a staff and a stay,
Upon which all mankind, confidingly leaning,
  Face calmly the menace of toothless decay.

HOW TO RAISE POTATOES

Take mellow soil, well plowed and harrowed,
And much manure,— paid for, or borrowed
  It matters not, if only it
Has the essence, which, when it's lacking,
Is prominent by not attacking
  Thy sense of smell — for purpose fit.

Mix in the dung, then in straight lines —
Let crookedness stay in confines
  Mapped out by chiefs of politics,
Who pose as grangers, to our grief,
And rob us, crying, "Hold the thief!" —
  Lay out the rows, and call on Hicks.

For without Hicks, your work is vain,
His nod means storm, his winking, rain;
  And when he smiles, it often thunders.
When well assured of his good will
Procure such tubers as will fill
  Your taste and bent, avoiding blunders.

The largest ones, with fine, clear eyes —
My advice, friend, do not despise,
  For eyes reflect the soul more true
Than sound of voice, though sweetly ringing,
Than clasp of hand, or footsteps springing —
  Now cut to shape, and then pursue.

Proceed to dig, quite deep, not shallow —
All superficial work, dear fellow,
  Offends the dollars, which will roll,
When from Fortuna's apron falling,
The other way. 'Tis oft appalling
  How they escape from men's control.

Potato bugs, in swarms untold,
And silver bugs, and bugs of gold,
  Are always near. The former nibble
As if by contract bound to kill.
The latter two their stomachs fill
  With unripe fruit, and ever quibble.

Use Paris green to interfere,—
  The color's not essential here.—
  With first named bugs, whose greed is shocking.—
The latter two, lure to their doom
By talking of the "Klondike Boom,"
  And precious dust to fill their stocking.

From thorough work do not recoil,
Keep down the weeds, and loose the soil,
  With rake and hoe or cultivator,—
The sproutings and the fungus, too,
In heart and mind, my friend, subdue,—
  And thou wilt raise a perfect "tater."

Let not the size of fruit deceive
Thy erring eye. Asunder cleave
  Or careful weigh: for often hollow
The largest ones are found to be.—
In judging men, the same degree
  Of care employ, before you follow.

Alas, my friend, 'tis sad indeed,
  When we, in search for wealth, succeed
  To find a great big empty hole.
For hollowness in tubers and
In human kind, none e'er should stand.
  Let "solidness" be thy parole.

RADIUM AND HELIUM

When rogues ill-gotten plunder,
  From State or Nation steal,
And live on, undetected,
  They call each doubtful deal
A case of radiation,
  Wherein the cash supply,
Or Radium as aptly,
  In all the winds doth fly.

But when these rogues encounter
  The Law's relentless grasp,
They change their cheerful chorus,
  To doleful tunes, which rasp.
Of Radium no longer,
  Doth deal their saddened strain,
But "Helium, oh Hel — ium,"
  Remains their sole refrain.

A LUCKLESS DOG

Once there was a cunning fellow,
  Who a queer old gun possessed,
Which he'd use a coon to mellow,
And he'd let it roar and bellow,
  When for meat his larder pressed.

Yet this gun, whose virtue surely,
  Placed it in the lead of tools
Which would kill — went prematurely
Off, and kicked, if loaded poorly
  By the hands of careless fools.

To this fellow came a stranger,
  With the purpose to improve
His own health, which was in danger,
And to threaten, as a ranger,
  Others' healths, while on the move.

And, equipped with warnings ample,
  And with stores of lead to boot,
He began, in Nature's temple
Future victories to sample —
  In other words, began to shoot.

But he hit, alas, I swear it,
  Nothing but the patient air,
Which, although abused, did bear it,
Better far than he, whose merit
  As hunter, dwindled then and there.

"What," cried he, "how solve this puzzle,
Which confounds and angers me?"
And he looked into the muzzle,
And his lips, as if to guzzle,
Pressed against the barrel he.

"Ah," cried he, "more powder's needed,
And momentum will ensue."
And in haste, he then proceeded —
While the ramrod swift he speeded,—
Coy Miss Fortune to subdue.

He the gunstock o'er his shoulder,
Held, well knowing it might kick —
And a chipmunk, scarcely older
Than his pet dog, on a boulder,
He espied, and then a click.

Click and bang! What a commotion!
Clouds of smoke, and there a heap,
Which — I say with due devotion
To the truth — looked, to my notion
Like a wreck, in oceans deep.

For the gun, as was expected,
Had discharged its two-way force,
And the canine, who neglected
Due precaution, was dissected
By the gunshaft in its course.

Thus we see that retribution
Overshot the end in view —
For one fearing dissolution
Should all thoughts of execution,
In his craven heart subdue.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

(Written at the time that Makaroff sunk with his ship.)

Here have we Japan's Emperor,
  Whose name, all know, is Mudsihito,
Which means, one who hits hard and often,
  Both openly, and incognito.
Will he, on land, as on the oceans
Deal out the same convincing potions?

And there the far-famed Makaroff
  With whom his own ship made away,
Alas, too soon for those who hoped
  That he would o'er the oceans sway,—
That he'd make off with Japan's fleet
And thus the Islanders defeat.

And whom will Kuropatkin cure?
  Will he strike terror in the ranks
Of those queer little Patkins who
  Now play their shrewd, mischievous pranks?
Or will the cure his name implies
Fall back on those he justifies?

There's Stoessel,* too, what may expect
  The hard, unbiased world of him?
Will he pound out the enemy
  Or his own comrades, stout and grim?
The question is, twixt me and you
What, oh what, will Stoessel do?

*Stoessel, in German, means pounder.

To come, to go, all seems the same,
  To those who in all things succeed.
And Togo is one of the boys
  Who doth no pointers from me need —
Yet after all is said, we know,
E'en Togo, too, will have to go.

There's Takahito, prince of Japan,
  A name which truthfully suggests,
That give and take is e'er the order
  Where force decides, while reason rests —
For reason not by force sustained
Hath often failed, and nothing gained.

THE ORIGIN OF THE SUNDOGS

In the dim long ago, in the milky way strolling,
  Abstracted, old Sol charming Luna espied,
Who, on the way home from a tea at the Virgin,
  Seemed flurried and flustered, and dejectedly sighed.
Said Sol, while he stroked his long beard, "To my notion,
Thou'rt angered, my child; what portends thy emotion?"

"At the Virgin," said Luna, "all planets had gathered,
  And stars of high lustre, and comets with tails
As long as my orbit. But all to describe,
  I am illy equipped, and my memory fails —
Yet do I remember that Neptune cried, 'Ho!
Long tails must be curtailed, and satellites go!'

"Jupiter remarked then, 'I am a reformer,
  And favor a law which doth strangers compel

To cross no one's pathway, e'en though it be ample
And clear at the moment. I'd furthermore swell
The income of planets, by smashing a few
Of second rate bodies, 'twixt me and 'twixt you.'

"The stars calmly twinkled, for they were well fixed,
And paid no attention to all the uproar.
But comets and moons were truly offended
And from all the clamor, both tired and sore.
And again the cry echoed, with fury increased:
'A tail is a nuisance, except on a beast.'

"The turmoil of voices was sorely appalling,
E'en Venus, the charmer, whom Mars doth adore,
Forgetting that anger is death to all beauty,
Allowed her shrill voice with the chorus to soar.
'The comets are welcome, the moons are O. K.,
The former, if tailless; the other away.'

"They forthwith attacked us, who, seeking salvation,
Sought it in flight without further delay.—
I, riding the tail of a loosely built stranger,
Noted the groundswell, while moving away.
'Death and corruption to satellites bold,'
And, 'off with the tails that the comets enfold.'

"'A tail of dimensions,' cried Mars in his anger,
While hacking away at the one I did mount,
'Which all doth engulf, and whose volume doth smother
The sight of a planet of foremost account,
No longer shall space, which for all doth exist,
Fill and usurp, with its vapors and mist.'

"'And moons,' cried Uranus, 'are as useless as caudals.
Exist, but their betters to cast in the shade.
Down with these lap-dogs, whose yelping and whining,
Doth the pure azure with languor pervade.
Puncture the gas tails, and let them collapse,
And purge of these monsters, the heavenly maps.'

"'Smite them, destroy them, or pull them apart,
Or condensate all, to gain space for to breathe,
And throw in the moonlets, as a spice for the whole,
And freeze it, or broil it, or cause it to seethe.'
Thus raged they, but fleeing, we gained in the race,
And now, I do plead for thy justice and grace."

Smiling spoke Sol, "I have noticed my planets
Are getting unruly when out of my range.
Yet fear not, my darling, I have in my kennel,
A litter of puppies, such wrongs to avenge —
And when they appear, it will be a cold day,
For those who offend thee, or darken thy way."

PHILOSOPHY

Spencer, Kant, and Schopenhauer,
Philosophers of matchless power,
All agree that grapes are sour,
If they hang too lofty and high —
And the sage who penned these lines
Says he feels, and he inclines,
To think that while the sun yet shines
Is the time to work, not sigh.

He also says, and thinks, and feels,
That the world's progressive wheels
Should be oiled with oil from heels
  Out of the idle kickers' socks —
And further, does this scribe assume
To say that there is surplus room
For each mortal to exhume
  Truths at which the sluggard mocks.

And at last, in apt conclusion,
Let this humble scribe's allusion
Be concise, to avoid confusion,
  In the statement of his part —
When he says, with due emphasis
That the most terrible Nemesis
Who gnaws and tortures us, and crazes,
  Is the conscience in our heart.

THE NIGHTMARE

The beasts of the forests, whose teeth are a menace,
  They frighten me ever, when near them I draw —
The insect, e'er gnawing, and buzzing, and humming,
  Doth use without mercy, its sting and its claw.
But tame are these terrors, scarce worthy a song,
When the gay little Nightmare comes trotting along.

The former upon us may feast, and devour us,
  Consuming the blood which we need ourselves —
Tormenting, and filling with pain-giving poison
  The veins thus bereft, do the pilfering elves.
And yet seem they harmless, with tooth and with prong,
When the gay little Nightmare comes trotting along.

The one, but the body alone can demolish,
  Or rob, thus enhancing their own vital store:
But the other, oh woe me, maliciously tramples,
  On the peace-craving soul, from its day-work, yet sore.
And weak grows the spirit, at other times strong,
When the gay little Nightmare comes trotting along.

It feasts on the things which should stay in the larder,
  Instead of o'erloading our stomach at night,
And thereby inviting this greedy intruder,
  To cast on the spirit, its emblems of fright,
Increasing the image of every wrong,
When the gay little Nightmare comes trotting along.

WHEN PAT SET FIRE TO THE SLOUGH

The autumn winds blew fierce and strong,
The marsh was dry, the grass was long,
  As long as hemp, I do avow:
"'Tis dangerous," quoth Pat, "indeed,
A firebreak, I sadly need."
  So he set fire to the slough.

The hungry flames devoured with zeal,
All in their reach, a goodly deal.
  And sweat spread o'er his honest brow.
They leaped, and danced in fiendish glee,
Like butterfly, or bumblebee,
  When Pat set fire to the slough.

The peat, inflamed like pitch and tar,
Is hard to quench. "My peace to mar,"
  Cried Pat, surprised. "This beats me now."

His hired man, with spade in hand,
He called to help him quench the brand,
  Where he set fire to the slough.

They worked with might, they dug and scooped,
Until their spirits sadly drooped,
  (So neighbors told me anyhow).
The drayman, too, Pat did employ,
Who poured much water out with joy,
  Where Pat set fire to the slough.

The selfsame neighbors named above
(Malicious chaps, who always love
  Some secret sport), they did allow:
"A private entrance down to h ——l
Is what Pat wants, and why Pat fell,
  To set that fire to the slough."

They also said (and blamed if I
The truth of it e'er could deny),
  That those who claim fate did endow
Them with such gifts as ne'er would make
The smallest blunder or mistake,
  They will set fire to the slough.

TO LUCULLUS

'Tis not as we imagine,
That dress makes up the man;
'Tis what we eat and what we drink,
That keeps us in the van.
I scorn thy flimsy feathers,
The cause of all thy pride,
But praise the man, who will and can
Such follies override.

For breakfast, I love buckwheat,
In shape of pancakes flat.
They give us luck, with foes to buck,
From landlord down to gnat.
I gladly look upon them —
The sight is patience wracking —
They are the food which will do good,
To those in courage lacking.

Another dish I relish,
Far less in every sense,
We call it hash; it rhymes with cash,
And goes at the expense
Of often harmless people
Who, at the time, not near —
Re-hash, if called, it oft appalled
Man's unprotected ear.

To those whose spirits ever,
Are boundless in their zeal,
I'd recommend, and e'er defend
A dish of jellied veal.

The calf, remember, mark it,
  Did furnish, too, the hide
In which are bound, books wise, profound,
  And valued far and wide.

The quail is for the stomach,
  What coal is for the stove:
It makes us warm, and does no harm,
  Wherever we may rove.
Yet, heed my earnest warning
  Be temperate, ne'er fail
Your vest to button, friend, be no glutton,
  Or surely thou wilt quail.

The ham, well cured and salted,
  (Salt is the spice of life),
Gives young and old, a better hold
  And strength, to meet earth's strife.—
I cannot help a thinking
  Of one, a precious twig,
His name was Ham, whose parent stem,
  Was drunk once like a pig.

To those in backbone lacking,
  I would point out corn starch,
Inward applied, both cooked or fried,
  T'will aid thy onward march.
Externally, 'twill also
  Increase the stiffening trend —
Thy upper lip, thy cuffs and bib,
  Keep ever stiff, my friend.

Eat fish, eat fish, my brother,
  Of every size and kind,
Thy brain will grow, and overthrow
  Thy flesh, soon left behind.

The missing link which monkeys
To men so proud could chain
Lacks, without fail, between the tail
Of apes, and human brain.

Of all the fruits delicious,
The grape is widely known.
I mean the grape, which man and ape
Pick from the vine alone.
But grape lodged in a cannon,
Inspect, my friend, with care.
Stand e'er behind, and bear in mind
That danger lurks in there.

The egg, when fresh, is certain
To please the man of taste,
But when half-hatched, be it dispatched,
Outdoors, in proper haste.
In politics, if rotten,
'Tis used on thrall and prince,
Its argument doth e'er present,
A force sure to convince.

A bun which, disappearing
Between thy lips, doth end,
Bespeaks a mind which is inclined
The good and sweet to blend.
And likewise, puns emerging
From out between thy lips,
Are a sure sign, thou dost not pine
Away, for want of squibs.

Eat salads, man, and sauces,
With "gander and with goose."
Thy appetite, it will excite,—
To hold or to let loose.

An empty stomach grumbles —
When filled, appeases wrath —
Great Lucullus, ever pull us
Onward in thy path.

POLITICS

Contagious like the measles,
Inflaming like the mumps,
Is ever-ready Politics,
When it upon us jumps.
Its hydra-heads, don't touch them,
For fear they should increase
In numbers and in arguments,
And thus disturb your peace.

In building up of platforms,
It is a true expert,
And if a plank don't fit one way,
'Tis easy to invert.
Oft planks spiked down are rotten,
Fit only as pretense,
Yet jugglers walk them without dread
Nor fear the consequence.

In Politics, the dollar
Has weight, and doth convince,
And he who has the most of 'em
Needs not his words to mince.
They influence the voter,
As light the gnats doth charm,
Who, in their suicidal ways,
Into the fire swarm.

RETRIBUTION

Often man doth stoop to dig
A spacious hole, both wide and big,
Large enough to hide a rig,
And conceals it with a twig:
  Hoping that some fellow fool
In his natural conceit,
Advancing, or in retreat,
  May fall into this slimy pool
To be picked, or fleeced, or flayed,
While he's down, surprised, dismayed.

But, Fate's whim and changing mood
Leads the fleecer and his brood
To over-reach in zeal their aim
And thereby, place in doubt their game.
  And again it happens that
They in glee perform a jig —
So to speak, an advance "swig"
  Do they draw from what they're at
Ere the plunder they control —
And fall into their self-dug hole.

A WISE CHICKEN

One day a chick of tender age,
Came near a silly parrot's cage.
Then spake the parrot, vain and wise,
"I'll be a bird of Paradise!"

The chick replied, with cheerful hum,
"My modest aim is Roosterdom,
A place well filled, by Fate assigned,
I deem a lot with honor lined."

THE SHREWDNESS OF DARWIN

According to Darwin, the ape is the sire
From whom in their glory, all mankind did spring;
And though we may doubt, we are bound to admire
The shrewdness with which to this tenet he'd cling.
For the ape acts quite human, and man is a monkey,
Unless he is wise, or a blundering donkey.

The way we are dressing is simply a "caution"
(Whate'er that may be, I'm somewhat in doubt),
And only our purses' entire exhaustion,
Doth keep us from aping the greatest "dude" out.
In dress and in manner, we strive to outshine
The ancestor presumptive, with the hair-covered spine.

A leader of brains, and attainments surpassing
May start a new party, abuses to mend,
But fails. For man's bias, his vainness caressing,
Compels him his aid to the to wicked lend.

But should, through a trick, the reformer's cause grow,
We ape the successful, and follow the show.

Even Religion, from the masking intruder,
  Is never exempt, nor in reverence spared,
Our aping propensity is the deluder,
  Which always the light-headed rabble ensnared.
To change their religion, or changing their coat,
They ever are prone, if it keeps them afloat.

And society's honors to the weak do appeal,
  Even more than the bread which his hunger allays —
A semblance to guard, and a state to reveal,
  Which ne'er he possessed, is the aim of his days.
And aping the real, he oft overleaps
The bounds in which Honor its votaries keeps.

PRINCE LAGOBE

Prince Lagobe of Hongo-Bongo,
  In the wilds of Africa,
Near the banks of ancient Congo,
  Had a child, fair Unica.

Strong of limb, and shining like a
  Polished-up melodeon,
She, with eyes as bright as mica,
  Held among the maids her own.

Said Lagobe the parent, winking:
  "Celebrate, I must and will,
Thy birthday, dear.— Ah, hear'st the clinking?
  Faith, he's fat, he'll fill the bill!"

And forthwith, a fettered victim,
White of face, and fair withal,
Was produced by guards who kicked him,
Onward in the din and squall.

Said the chief, with inward chuckle:
"Honored art thou to be stewed,
Or be roasted, thigh and knuckle,
For my child's with taste imbued."

Quoth the stranger, "Taste, I take it,
In the sense thou dost betray,
I'd offend, for, boil or bake it,
Flesh of mine is foul to-day.

"For a sudden change in diet
Which I, shipwrecked, had to try,
Left me, though I now am quiet,
In a state not fit to fry.

"Yet the seed of the great onion
Which I never leave behind,
Will reclaim, while in my dungeon,
All the flavors of my kind.

"Go thou hence, and plant each kernel,
Cultivate the sproutings. See?
And by all in thee infernal
Thou shalt smack thy lips at me."

It was done. No time was wasted,
The stranger's relish to perfect,
But the chief, who once had tasted
Of the "tearplant," did object.

Said Lagobe: "Such food is fitter,
For a chieftain of my fame —
And with you I'll feed a litter
Of young panthers, far from tame."

Shrieked the maid, "Oh liquid pumice!
Even if he flavor lacks,
To my taste, a living groom is
Better far than perfume stacks."

Said Lagobe, "Child, thou art silly,
Yet, since I the tearplant keep,
Shalt thou too, my gay young filly,
Have the morsel in thy sweep."

Spoke aside the stranger, sighing,
"From the pot I have escaped,
Yet ordeals, not much less trying,
Fate for me has doubtless shaped."

And aloud: "Oh chieftain, nicely
Did'st thou speak and too, direct,
And your words fulfill precisely
What I hoped, or could expect.

"Still, more tearplant seeds are needed,
For the seasons yet to be.
And my love, who for me pleaded,
Shall, Lagobe, share thine with thee.

"Till I, with a store more ample,
Of the kernels, thee salute,
Which e'en better than the sample,
Thou shalt own without dispute."

And he left. None e'er detained him,
On his way, no longer doomed —
But Lagobe, though nothing pained him,
Wept as if by grief consumed.

Wept, I say, and in his weeping,
Joined his offspring, steeped in brine.
Both had gorged themselves, thus keeping,
The tearplant's rank growth in confine.

THE DUDE

For reasons well-founded he's wearing
A single glass over one eye,
He knows one is more than sufficient
His thinker with food to supply.

He carries a cane like a pencil,
To balance himself in his gait,
To steady the thoughts which he harbors,
Which only on great mortals wait.

He rolls up the rim of his trousers
As a sign of his standing 'mongst men;
And calls himself "Chawley," or "Billy,"
Or "Jimmie," or "Johnny," or "Hen."

And when he is dead and forgotten —
Alas! facts are cruel and sad —
Another e'en more self-sufficient
To the mirth of the living doth add.

THE TACTICIAN

Two bad little boys had been naughty,
  Had offended their mother one day,
Who sent them to bed in a hurry
  To punish them and to dismay.

And after their father's home-coming
  She told him her woe and her plight,
And forthwith he mounted the stairway
  The boys' tender muscles to smite.

Said Willie, "Oh papa is coming
  We'll catch it now, surely, you bet!
I'm going to act as if sleeping,
  And he may postpone and forget."

Said Harry, whose insight was deeper,
  Who knew whom he could not delude,
"I'll put on my heaviest drawers,
  And dress to be fit for the feud."

EARLY POEMS

EVOLUTION

A stately tree may meet the eye,
With spreading boughs which testify
That health and strength there hidden lie,
  Securely sunk.
The worm of death already may
Feed on its marrow, and decay
May checkless spread, and soon convey
  To dust, its trunk.

When youth or maid, both strong and fair,
Doth cross thy path, and seem to share
Life's grandest gifts, naught will compare
  With their good cheer.
Yet oft unseen by mortal eye
Destruction may already hie
To swoop down on them, and they lie
  Upon their bier.

The stars on high, whose lustre bright,
Our admiration e'er invite,
Eternal seeming in their flight,
  Like tree and man
Will perish when their time has come
Will fall to dust, and fleet-like scum —
To Nature's laws, all must succumb:
  Such is God's plan.

An apprehension of our mind
To creatures born, by time confined,
Is Death. And we, shortsighted, blind,
  Can't penetrate
The past, the future, nor to-day:
With glaring lights, with shadows gray,
Forever changing, often gay,
  Then grim as fate.

An endless chain, life seems to be —
The wheel revolves, a mystery,
To which none found, as yet, the key.
  And you and I,
Each with a link I should compare,
While you go up, I downward stare —
Death follows life — life is death's heir —
  As time doth fly.

And He, whose hand the endless chain,
Forever moves, He did ordain
That in each atom, life should reign,
  Without an end.
And "Death" to Him, is but a stade,
A term to show that His handmaid,
Kind Nature, changed a form decayed
  To forms more grand.

Thus it appears God's plan to solve
The problem "Life" is to evolve
All forms obscure, and to revolve
  And e'er renew
All waning shapes, and spirits worn —
The mystery we call "new born,"
A higher state, each to adorn,
  And live anew.

THE NATURE OF GOD

The nature of God, ah, a solemn discourse,
Unfruitful, perhaps, yet forever the source
Of musing and searching, of earnest debate,
Of quarrels unholy. (Fanatics estate.)

The paganish notions, unstable and crude,
A mixture of folly and reason include;
The Christian doctrines, advanced and refined
Still leave quite a void in philosopher's mind.

But alas, we are human, and human the scale
Which we in delusion and arrogance fail
To confine to such matters as earth-born man
Can weigh in his reason of limited span.

The nature of God? Ah, may I presume
To liken God's nature to sweetest perfume,
Which, all-penetrating, forever doth spread,
The living embracing, and charming the dead?

And men and all creatures I'd liken to ghosts,
Who, eager for fragrance, throng forward in hosts,
The strongest in spirit, near kindred of God,
O'ertaking the thralldom of Mammon and Clod.

All generous spirits, whose hands never missed
In kindness united the weak to assist,
Press onward, serenely, with God in their view,
And followed by blessings, find surely their due.

The stunted, the weaker, who cling in despair
To all that is transient, to all that seems fair,
Are hiding in darkness, unwilling to heed
The voice of their brothers, and often recede.

They worship their treasures, ill-gotten and vain,
And deeds most unselfish invite their disdain.
They die, but remembered by heirs who regard
The process with pleasure, although they die hard.

Meanwhile the great fountain of love and of life
Pours forth his sweet odors, ignoring the strife;
The selfish are punished, they feel their own rod —
Revenge is too narrow, too human, for God.

ON OKOBOJI LAKE

On the deck of the "Huntress," in the heat of July,
Amid all the beauties of water and sky,
I met a fair maiden of azure blue eye.
Her form rather slight, and modest her air,
I remember not color of dress nor of hair;
I saw her eyes only, her blue eyes so fair.

I stared at her breathless, strained every sense;
Her blue eyes enslaved me, I meant no offense,
And tried to subdue my emotion intense.
But in vain. Like the magnet which strives for the pole,
Like the pilgrim, who ceaselessly follows his goal,
So followed my eyes her, my eyes and my soul.

My conduct seemed rude, deserving reproach,
In haste I turned from her and watched the approach
Of the rippling billows which rocked our coach.

But as sure as the sun will rise in the east,
And Nature's the only, and truest high-priest,
As sure did my eyes return to their feast.

Alas, 'twas soon over; She returned my last gaze;
My trip was completed, I was stunned in a maze.
I stepped from the deck. To the end of my days
I'll regret that this romance, so short and so brief,
Thus ended so fruitless, and deep-seated grief
Did gnaw at my heart ever since, like a thief.

PEACE BORN IN STRIFE

Hate and love, antagonistic,
  Threaten thee, or else persuade,
And other forces, plain or mystic,
  Cause thee to gain or retrograde
In mental worth, in strength of soul,
And in the realm where gain's the goal.

Thy peace of mind, by hate afflicted,
  From envious persecution sore,
Abused by clamor, unrestricted,
  And judged by scoffers who adore
Naught else but self, will sorely grieve
And cause thy breast in pain to heave.

Hence, if thy aim is peace unbroken,
  If from passions thou wouldst flee,
If of strife the smallest token
  Pains thy heart and saddens thee,
Then retreat from where man liveth;
Solitude e'er solace giveth.

But wouldst, Oh mortal, nurse and cherish
  Character and virtues high,
Which unresisted melt and perish
  Like snowflakes 'neath Sahara's sky,
Then face the world with all its troubles,
Its envy, hate, ambition's bubbles.

For little credit is reflected
  On virtue from temptations free,
And your peace thus gained, affected,
  Is but a truce, not bound to thee,
But worth, sustained in righteous strife,
Distinction gives to humblest life.

WHENEVER

Whenever I a seed perceive,
Which, sprouting, in its time doth weave
The ripened fruit for us to cleave,
I feel that much I should retrieve;
Whenever I a seed perceive.

Whenever I a blossom see
It animates and rouses me,
Dispells my aimless reverie
And fills my soul with melody;
Whenever I a blossom see.

Whenever I a fruit espy,
Well matured, the battle cry
Seems quite natural and nigh;
"All's a fruiting, why not I?"
Whenever I a fruit espy.

Whenever I a grave survey,
It checks my spirit in its sway,
And mutely preaches, "All is clay;
You've come to dwell here, not to stay;"
Whenever I a grave survey.

Whenever I discouraged feel,
I seek for solitude, and kneel
And pray to Him, the only real,
The truest friend in woe and weal,
Whenever I discouraged feel.

A SONG FOR AMERICANS WHO ARE IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

Why do we love and why revere
The hills, the dales, the atmosphere,
  The holy ground,
Where our childhood's cradle stood,
Where youthful hearts, and cheerful mood
  E'er did abound?

Why do we languish for a rest
On native soil, and manifest
  A warm emotion
To breathe the air, as oft of yore,
Beneath the spreading sycamore,
  In complete devotion?

Why do our hopes and wishes blend,
When laud we hear and comprehend
  That our home

Has gained distinction and esteem,
Has risen high, as only cream
  Doth reach worth's dome?

Why does a flash of pleasure thrill
Through bone and marrow, and refill
  Our wasting frame
With delight, with hope and cheer,
Whene'er the stars and stripes appear
  In Freedom's name?

Why does death not terrify
Those who to thy rescue fly,
  Oh Fatherland?
When enemies thy strand assail,
'Mid murky clouds, and springtide wail,
  Why do they firmly stand?

Why does the water downward flow,
Why does the sun not freeze the snow?
  And why, Ah, why,
Yes, why does God a love implant
Which finds us hopeful, militant,
  Until we die?

GOD AND HIS CREATURES

Man:

I am the proud master of all in my reach;
My sway, unconfined, none dares to impeach;
  My rights are firm rooted, o'er the sea and the land;
The beast in the field, and the fish in the ocean,
Await my command. If such is my notion,
  All may I destroy with my far-reaching hand.

God:

Not so. Thou proud mortal, thy claims I refuse;
Thou shalt give account for each wrong and abuse
Of creatures less gifted, but truer; I see,
Not master, but servant, born helpless and nude
Thou hast little reason for boasting so rude,
For all thy possessions, Earth loaned them to thee.

Man:

At least, O my Lord, the fields which I own,
For which I have paid, which I tilled and have sown,
Are mine undisputed, forever to keep —
For thou seest, O Lord, I must eat and must dress,
And my wants are increasing, while time doth progress,
Excusing desires to garner and reap.

God:

Alas, my poor creature, ill placed is thy trust,
In riches e'er fleeting. Thy health now robust
May fall a swift prey to the germs of disease,
And all thy possessions, which now are thy pride
Will fail thee, when Death, with impetuous stride
Advances, proclaiming thy final release.

Man:

O Lord, I am humbled, I see my grave fault,
I've little, ah, little, myself to exalt
O'er the beast of the field, or the bird in the air;
Yet have I a body distinguished for grace,
Which doubtless is mine for the limited space
Allotted to me in this world full of care.

God:

Error, delusion. Again thou art wrong;
Microbes now infesting thy body so strong,
Have claims better founded to own their abode,
No palpable riches, no visible wealth,
Not even thy body, much less thy fair health,
Canst Mortal, retain. Time all doth corrode.

Man:

Oh pity, me Lord! Of all I'm deprived;
My delusion has left me, while fears have arrived;
All toil and all labors are vain, I despond.
The beast of less reason, the flowers which bloom,
Look forward e'er hopeful, not knowing their doom,
While I, thy first child, feel the weight of my bond.

God:

Despair not, my darling, I've placed near thy hand
Inexhaustible treasures, which Time will withstand;
They are virtue and kindness to the weak and the poor,
Not words, empty words, but thy works and thy deeds
Are a passport to me when death supersedes
Thy bubble of wealth and vain glory obscure.

The ablest of mankind, the noblest and best,
I have placed in the lead, with vice to contest.
Those less penetrating, less skillful and wise,
Including the masses who labor for gain,
I have placed in positions where the humble and plain
Can garner up treasures which death ne'er defies.

VIRTUE

Virtue, 'tis virtue, which all of us cherish,
  Whenever we find it, in young or in old.
The charms of our body will fade and will perish,
  But virtue its beauty forever will hold.
Without it, our lives would few pleasures possess,
For virtue is the fountain of happiness.

The heroes who bravely, with praiseworthy mettle,
  From the primitive times to this hour to-day,
Their disputes with sword and with war ax did settle,
  Or like the old bards, by chanting their lay —
They all were in league with virtue, yes all,
For virtue gives strength, but will never enthrall.

Without it, the state and the churches would tremble,
  For it is the pillar on which they all rest.
Remove not this stay, but let us assemble,
  And pray to its Sender, that virtue be blessed
With success even greater than heretofore seen
And that vice and all evil depart from its sheen.

Virtue opposes the mean and the narrow,
  And provides for our mind, an oasis to rest.
But vice begets sickness of flesh and of marrow,
  And stunts our spirit with relish and zest.
Virtue invites us to earn a bright crown,
While vice on the good and exalted doth frown.

THE WIND

Unsteady in habits, and given to freaks,
I roam o'er the valleys and high mountain peaks.
I float in the air, impartial and fair,
O'er the homes of the nabob, and children of care.
I dispel the foul odors which rise from the earth,
And thereby diminish both sickness and dearth.

I refresh both the strong, the weak, and unstaid,
And fan the fair cheeks of the golden-haired maid,
Who thinks of her lover, to whom I waft,
Her ardent good wishes, with Cupid's shaft —
I blow without ceasing o'er land and sea,
From the time of creation to eternity.

My husband, the storm, so mighty and strong,
Sleeps often, while I regret the wrong,
Which he, in his rage and checkless power,
Has wreaked upon man in his waking hour.
The mightiest ships in his hands are toys,
Whene'er he a playful mood enjoys.

My oldest two sons, Tornado, Cyclone,
Are the terror of the living in every zone.
They toy not, they play not, they only destroy,
They hear to no prayers, no mercy employ.
They wreck and demolish in terrible rage,
And spare neither merit nor sex nor age.

Boreas, my third-born, although not my last,
Is a boy of grim habits, and ruthless his blast.

His garments of sleet and snow defy —
His breath is chilling, and fierce his cry.
He comes from his castle, his arctic home,
When Nature is sleeping, with us to roam.

The pride of his mother, my tenderest child,
Is Zephyrus, my youngest, whose breath so mild
Kisses, caresses, and softly entwines,
The rich and the needy, and him who repines.
His presence is life, for death must flee
From a being as gentle and charming as he.

LIFE IS A STREAM

Life is a stream,
  And streams harbor life.
Both flow swiftly,
  In ceaseless strife.

Both begin humble
  And swell to a stream.
Both have their breakers,
  Their shade, and their gleam.

Life, like streams,
  Should be dammed in
By moral influence
  To keep us from sin.

Streams dry up,
  And life turns to woe,
If the nourishing fountain
  Is stopped in its flow.

Life, like streams,
  Should be pure and clean.
Or the fish and our virtue,
  Will die in Death's seine.

Life, like streams,
  It is a sad fact,
Is often disturbed
  By vice's cataract.

Streams have sand,
  And so should we.
Life, like the Jordan,
  Flows to the Dead Sea.

BE YE READY

Life is short, thou may'st be dead
E'er to-morrow's sun has fled,
Therefore keep, yes, keep an eye
On the goal beyond the sky.
Never swerve, but listen, hark,
Aim high enough, aim at worth's mark.

Let your standard be sublime —
Live up to it, every time,
Like Ulysses, pass the isle;
If the sirens thee beguile,
Fill your ears with wax a span,
Steer ahead and be a man.

A pilgrim in this world thou art,
Not to stay, but to depart,
Do the right, "first, last, and ever."
Listen not, oh listen never
To the tempter, who in snares,
Leads and lures you unawares.

Whate'er thou doest, do it well,
'Tis the kernel, not the shell,
Which the Judge of judges will
Probe and weigh, and then distil,
From the wealth thy soul contains
All the dross and other stains.

THE FATE OF ALL CREATION

Slow are the powers, and slow the force,
  Which Nature's transient works secure;
But swiftly flows destruction's course,
Unceasing, and without remorse,
  Despoils all things ere they mature.

A hundred ants in patience toil
  Exerting all their strength and power,
To build their home within the soil —
A trampling foe has come to spoil
  Their work, this very hour.

"A thousand dewdrops, heaven's tears,"
  Were needed to sustain the rose,
Before the fragrant bloom appears,
Which, when mature, us ever cheers,
  And charms us to repose.

Anxiety and parents' hope,
With cares and doubtings mingled,
Have reared you gently, now to cope
With cruel fate, on downward slope —
For death hath thee outsingled.

The works of man, so vast in cost,
Are sharing all the same sad fate.
Our energies we do exhaust —
The work is done, but quicker lost,
To the destroyer's lasting hate.

Therefore, depend not on this life,
Look higher up with your mind's eye.
Fight bravely in this earthly strife —
When full of years with trials rife,
Then fear thou not, but look on high.

FOR A HARVEST FESTIVAL

To-night we assemble, and without a preamble,
We offer up thanks, with hearts most sincere,
To Him, who in kindness, though fierce winds may ramble,
Provides for all creatures upon our sphere.
Grateful for boons of the past, we prepare
To add supplications for our future welfare.

Manifold harvests are ripening ever,
Each at its period in the ocean of time.
Therefore behooves it the thoughtful and clever,
Always to join in a thanksgiving chime.
Not bound to the seasons, which go and return,
Are the fruitbearing moments in our sojourn.

The farmer, whose diligence never is sleeping,
  Carefully husbands the crops of the field,
Shelters his cattle against the storm's sweeping,
  And gathers, rejoicing, his labor's rich yield.
He harvests, like others, but what he has sown,
And gains by hard labor what fain he would own.

The preacher has chances to see more disaster,
  Than anyone else, save the doctor alone,
Trying to follow the steps of the Master,
  He laughs with the cheerful, and shares in their moan.
The harvest he gathers is gratitude chiefly —
Not riches to boast of (I mention it briefly).

The doctor, though ample are often his earnings,
  Risks daily his health in his calling severe,
But only success rewards his heart's yearnings,
  Not lucre alone, which naught can endear.
He shortens his own life, and lengthens his brother's
And gives his best council unstinted to others.

The teacher conscientiously watching and caring,
  Nursing each germ in the mind immature,
Reaps his reward when his pupils are sharing
  In all that he garnered and stored up secure.
And other rewards, to him useful and needed,
Truly earned he, who his case nobly pleaded.

The laborer, lawyer, the merchant, and banker,
  Each gathers two harvests, most unlike in worth;
And those who in greed for the one ever hanker,
  Find oft, at life's ending, not wealth, but mere dearth.
The one is but useful in limited measure,
The other a jewel — a most priceless treasure.

The children have harvests in games they are playing,
The joy they are reaping is well worth the while;
And parents, who watch them, are plainly betraying,
They, too, have a harvest in every smile.
For sowing and reaping, in endless career
Is the task of the living, beneath the stars here

Death alone gathers unceasing, forever,
His sickle ne'er rests, while the hourglass' sands
Are measuring time, and its keen cut doth sever
The lifethread unfailing, with tireless hands.
His harvest proceeds, while we mortals are sowing,
Nor slackens in vigor, when mankind is mowing.

Yet clearly we see we have cause to exult,
For the prince of all reapers e'en cannot deprive
Us of the last harvest which child or adult
Has chances to reap, and to store in mind's hive.
E'en should of both harvests, the lesser us fail,
We've reasons for gladness, and naught to bewail.

We therefore, if fair or foul be the weather,
Should join in a silent, yet deeply felt prayer;
And all the great blessings, which field and which heather
Brought forth, we are willing with others to share.
May, in the near future, with fostering hand,
The Lord of creation His blessings expand.

THE BEST REMEDY

Should gloom thy soul entwine,
  Oh man of care!
  Remember e'er
That he who doth repine
  A burden is, and not a stay,
  A fragile twig, which breaks away,
From duty's holy shrine.

Bestir thyself and seek
  For such as are
  In need. Debar,
Lamenting, selfish, weak —
  In active love, and deeds of aid
  Thou wilt build up a palisade.
Against disaster's shriek.

The balsam which thy hand
  With care doth spread
  On wounds which bled,
Its healing will expand,
  Until thy own sore soul it heals,
  Unknown to thee. God oft reveals
Therein his gracious hand.

A FOREST IDYL

In a primeval Iowa forest
I once knew a charming Idyl,
Where the deer and the squirrels were roaming,
And the brooklets are murmuring still;
Where the trees bent their crowns to listen
To the chant of the whip-poor-will.

I remember the ferns and the lilies,
And the May-apple too, and the smell
Of the fragrant and beautiful flowers,
A blooming, perfuming the dell,
And the pond where the ducks were a fishing —
I surely remember it well.

I see a disciple Diana's
Advancing in the break;
I see the glistening glimmer
Of a weird enchanted lake;
I see a rabbit entangled
In the coils of a rattlesnake.

I see the beautiful linden
With its blossoms hazy and sweet,
And the king of the woodlands so stately,
The Oak, in its grandeur I meet,
And violets nodding and napping
And winking most discreet.

Alas, for the charms of nature
Gave way to human greed,

For the beautiful forest primeval
Was destroyed with root and seed;
And sadly the murmuring brooklets,
Are flowing through the reed.

THE COSMOPOLITAN

Be not selfish, narrow,
In your views of life.
Be no cit nor censor
In your earthly strife.

Do not call attention
To your neighbor's faults:
While your own dear hobby,
Leads you in a waltz.

Bear in mind, remember,
That gold is found in dust,
That oft the sweetest honey
Has poison in its crust.

If others from you differ
In politics or creed,
Then use your broadest standard
To weigh each word and deed.

There is no being so humble,
So unimportant, small,
Which has no flowing fountain
Of something good, at all.

The sun, the grand life-giver,
  Is small compared with God,
Who made the worm that's creeping,
  Beneath the crumbling sod.

Be therefore broad and gentle,
  In judging fellow man;
Be one of Nature's nobles —
  A cosmopolitan.

I'VE SEEN THEM BLOOM AND FADE

I've seen them bloom and fade,
The rose and charming maid,
  Both in their prime,
While those who modest in their aim
Discretely rose, and overcame
  All blights of tide and time.

I loved them both too well,
A slave to beauty's spell;
  Yet one sad thing
Remains, although I've long forgot
The fragrance sweet, which they'd allot —
  'Tis their sharp thorny sting.

I've watched with zeal, and found
Fair maids who never frowned
  With pride and scorn.
I've found a vine, whose bloom and fruit
Impressively and strong, yet mute,
  Proclaimed its worth inborn.

I've often in my day
Seen worth in scant array,
  While worthlessness
In splendor dwelt, in borrowed guise,
A sham, a mockery, a prize,
  Of transitoriness.

The triumphs of conceit
Are short and incomplete.
  To fill this gap,
Worth will force aside distrust,
Will melt or break suspicion's crust,
  And fall in honor's lap.

A DELUSION

Go, tell me not that friendship
  E'er did in truth exist
Between a male and female —
  I pray you, silence, whist!
'Tis naught but a delusion
  Dispelled soon like a mist.

The ties which bind together
  The sexes firm and strong,
Did differ e'er from friendship
  As color doth from song,
As truth from virtue differs,
  And wise men do from strong.

The all-embracing forces,
  The only true cement,

Which binds to willing thralldom
Its victims, most content
Is love, the great life giver,
Life's safest battlement.

A RAINY DAY

Mist and clouds of kindred sway,
See the sisters in array;
Moisture pregnant o'er us hover.
The sun their sire and their stay
Has veiled his face, and cloudlets gay
Entwine the mist, their truest lover.

Then the Master, high, supreme,
In wisdom leads an arctic stream
From his spacious northern cooler;
The winds, the trusty servants, stream,
The azure mortar's edges gleam,
Obedient to the highest ruler.

The thunder rolls "the voice of God"—
(Bow low, ye mortal sons of clod,
His name ye ever shalt revere.)
His lightning steed, with fire shod
Awaits his order and his nod,
And terror shakes the atmosphere.

But lo! The wonder! See the rain!
The clouds condensed, as liquid, strain
And slowly settle on the sod;
Refreshing blossom, root, and grain —
A valued boon in man's domain —
One of the num'rous gifts of God.

The sun again shines forth serene,
Dispels the transient misty screen,
The rainbow then, the gorgeous arch
Of covenant, in splendor's sheen
Spans hills and dales and brooks between,
And life triumphs in onward march.

FAME AND LOVE

Heroes famed for mental power
In the realm of art and letters —
Heroes, strong and fair, the flower
Of all times, who broke their fetters;
All conquerors. But like a tower
Looms up love, which has no betters.
Fame, when dead, is good enough,
But while I live, oh give me love.

Brutal men, distinction seeking
(Fame thus gained is but a crime),
Slaughtered countless fellows, reeking
From the blood of victims prime.
But Love (in terms of reverence speaking)
Has conquered hate, oh many a time.
Fame, when dead, is good enough,
But while I live, oh give me love.

Mighty kingdoms, oft erected
By the sword in ruthless hand,
Long have crumbled, and dejected,
We musing o'er the ruins stand.

However, love with truth connected,
  Doth immortality command.
Fame, when dead, is good enough,
But while I live, oh give me love.

Lasting fame must have more merit
  Than selfish aims and brutal force.
And the estates which we inherit,
  None can retain by nature's course.
Yet all invites you, if you dare it,
  You'll rule in life through love, its source.
Fame, when dead, is good enough,
But while I live, oh give me love.

PEACE

Life's tumults and struggles trying,
  Have their charms and their delight.
Battlefields, and pennants flying,
  E'er the petulant excite.
But the wise and good agree
"Peace's the best in life for me!"

Fierce contention ever rages;
  Love of gold and gain unite,
And ambition in all ages
  Missed its aim, and did invite
Criticism stern and free;
"Peace's the best in life for me."

Passions, too, like fire burning,
  Find their way into each heart.

And selfishness, us onward spurning,
Kills our joys like poisoned dart,
From which the wise in haste should flee;
"Peace's the best in life for me."

Fame and riches, e'er decoying,
Guide our steps from peace and rest,
While the modest are enjoying
Contentedness, forever blessed.
The rich and great die hard, we see —
"Peace's the best in life for me."

AN IDYL OF THE FOREST

A wondrous flower, fair and sweet,
I found one day, a blooming.
'Twas near the seam where woodlands meet,
The rivulet e'er fuming;
The rivulet whose waters fleet
Skip onward laughing, booming.

The sun shone bright, each shady nook,
Did wink to rest inviting,
And shadows of fantastic crook,
E'er parting and uniting,
As it would please the wind, that shook
The leaves, in play delighting.

Of universal brotherhood
Aware, and of life's weaving,
Which constantly goes on, I stood
A sighing, faintly heaving,
With yearnings for all that is good
My heart was fairly cleaving.

The murmurings which overhead
  Ne'er ceased their coaxing, suing,
Their influence o'er me did spread,
  Old memories renewing,
And sitting down, I spun a thread,
  All thoughts of time eschewing.

The sorcerers both, Sleep and Dream,
  Soon over me came stealing;
And still I spun the selfsame theme
  My constant thoughts revealing,
My thoughts of her whom I esteem
  A fay of love and healing.

I dreamed of her! All-mother kind,
  Sweet Nature, ever laving,
All wounded hearts, in balm refined
  When faint with longing, craving.
And she, who softly me entwined,
  My road to joy was paving.

Half dreaming, when a sudden chill
  All over me came creeping,
And, looking up, a horror thrill
  Spread o'er me, fast and sweeping,
A rattlesnake with fiendish skill
  His coils prepared for leaping.

When suddenly a voice spoke out,
  In accents low and charming,
"I pray, sit still, and I will rout
  This monster, thee alarming."
The wondrous voice, so sweet, devout,
  Dispelled all fears a swarming.

Then swift as light, a scarf unrolled
  Flew, on the snake descending.
And rising up, I did behold
  A maid, who, me defending,
Had beauty rare, which did unfold
  A sight with heaven blending.

Her light-brown hair, so rich and fair,
  As fine as silk, and glist'ing,
Like morning dew, it could ensnare
  The coolest man existing.
And O, her lips, like rosebuds rare,
  Charmed me beyond resisting.

Her modest eye she downward cast,
  My searching gaze evading,
And still my eyes their sweet repast
  Continued, me persuading
That toil for her 'mid chilling blast
  Would ne'er be mean, degrading.

Her rounded form, erect, yet slight,
  Her virgin age disclosing,
Beamed forth in health and virtue's light
  Bewitching and imposing;
'Twas clear to me she could requite
  All trust in her reposing.

Entranced I stood. The rattlesnake,
  Meantime his bondage breaking,
Escaped in haste. Though wide awake,
  My mind was time forsaking.
At last I broke the spell, to shake
  With thanks her hand now quaking.

Sweet barefoot child! A crimson wave
Rose up, her fair face tinting
With rarest hues. Ne'er did engrave,
Or paint, a hand imprinting,
Such charms as these, my soul did crave;
"O God! This is thy minting!"

I felt a thrill, her finger tips,
A current were discharging.
I saw her blush, I saw her lips
Grow pale 'neath passions charging.
No maiden's charms could hers eclipse —
I'm surely not enlarging.

She bowed her head, I did the same;
My senses all were swimming:
My cheek touched hers, my passion's flame
With ecstasy was brimming.
I kissed her lips — who would me blame
For such a nectar skimming?

"No, no," she cried, "my Grandpa sure
My coming is expecting."
She swiftly tore her form so pure
From my embrace, neglecting
The scarf, her headgear, to procure,
Now in my eyes reflecting.

With scarf in hand, her path I traced,
My raptured thoughts recruting;
Ne'er mortal man a fairy chased
(Whose buoyant gait refuting
The thought that she by flesh embraced)
More fit for Love's saluting.

Soon did my searching eye discern
A rail-fence odd, enclosing
A humble hut, a patch of fern,
A man of age, reposing,
Beneath an oak tree proud and stern,
He sat half sleeping, dozing.

The mellow breeze, his silvery hair,
Which on his brow was glowing,
Like glist'ning waves, like blossoms rare,
Caressingly was blowing,
And playfully perfumed the air
With scents from lilacs flowing.

The maid approached. His feeble hand
Once strong in youth, lay resting
On Hector's head, whom New Foundland
Could claim his own, suggesting,
That e'er the weak near him doth stand,
Whose strength is fear-arresting.

In glee the dog, the graceful maid
Encircled, ever leaping,
His joyful bark, a serenade
I deemed most perfect, sweeping.
He loved her too, for he obeyed,
Which surely was in keeping.

I followed soon. The sage arose,
The maid stood trembling, blushing,
The dog who growled in threatening pose
Did heed his master's hushing.
And soon like friends we all stood close —
Nearby a brooklet gushing.

I bowed, explained in confidence,
What brought me here, omitting
Howe'er, to dwell with eloquence
On things which caused a twitting
Within my heart, and penitence
Seemed now in place, befitting.

The hoary sage, with cheerful face,
Asked me to join their dining.
And I, too willing to embrace
A chance so rare, combining
A feast for eyes, and wisdom's grace,
I thought not of declining.

I must admit I was enthralled,
There could be no denying.
The hour-hand which often crawled,
For once I thought was flying,
In such a way I was appalled,
Its speed was mortifying.

The treatment I received, instilled
Hopes cheering and perplexing
Within my heart. Since then, I killed
Much time, the love annexing,
Of those I loved. They, plain, unskilled,
Ne'er found my presence vexing.

Alas, since then the world has changed,
Here joy, there sorrow flinging;
But she and I we have arranged
That to each other clinging,
We'll face all storms, and unestranged
Meet all, fate may be bringing.

THE FOG HORN

Lord, oh lead us in life's ocean,
  Draw Thy hand not from Thy creature,
Cleanse our hearts with healing lotion,
  Stamp Thy image on each feature:
Guide our life-ship when the weather
Is calm or fierce, o'er sea or heather.

Guard our course when earthly passions,
  Masked in garb of harmless sport,
Undermine our best possessions,
  Our virtue true, our health resort.
Send Thy pilot Prudence ever
Us from reefs to steer and sever.

When dusk enshrouds our firmament,
  And blinding storms our envelope —
When guilt shakes us most violent,
  Then light, Oh Lord, our beacon Hope;
And re-ignite and fan the flame,
Of honor, rectitude, and fame.

But when obscured by fog and mist,
  Our beacon light, our hope has fled,
The compass lost, then, Lord, assist,
  Or storms will our morals shred.
Then in our fog-horn, Conscience, blow
A mighty blast, and light will glow.

THE DIGNITY OF LABOR

When my spirits are fettered, and my heart filled with gloom,
And the air seems to breathe destruction and doom;
When the songs of the birds no longer me cheer,
And the sunbeams of hope are displaced by fear,
And ready to totter, cheer's fostering prop,
Then I go to the work-bench that stands in my shop.

There stands my old comrade, my true and tried friend,
In times of grim heartache, me now to defend.
Soon the ring of the hammer, and the whiz of the saw,
Dispel the dark phantoms, who flee with awe
From the dignified angel who guards the shrine
Devoted to labor, to labor divine.

Labor, like virtue, makes strong us, and free,
And God is delighted its footprints to see.
Labor is the only, the sure antidote
Our sorrows to lighten (and joys to promote),
Which burden our mind, and make us quake,
And threaten our heart with grief to break.

Labor is the power which all should seek,
Who desire to ascend to the loftiest peak
Of success, of honor, of undying fame;
Like Kepler, the searcher of illustrious name,
Like Cæsar, who conquered the world alone,
Like Franklin, whose star so brightly shone.

And those contented with a humbler lot,
Should bear in mind that labor is not

A torture invented us to disgrace,
For every being must fill its place
In the workshop of Nature. God did decree
That toil be the lever the slave to free.

TO THEE ALONE

The north winds are blowing
  So chilling, so cold,
But my heart, it grows warmer,
  With feelings untold.

My thoughts often wander
  To the dear one I love,
While the clouds in the heavens
  Grow darker above.

The winter draws nearer,
  The summer has flown;
I send its last blossoms
  To thee alone.

THE AVENGERS OF IBICUS

When Ibicus was dying
  Laid low by ruthless hand,
A flock of cranes came flying,
Their wings repose denying,
  Bound for their native land.

Then up, with trembling finger,
  He pointed towards the cranes,
And spoke: "Brave birds, don't linger,
Speed on, avenge the singer,
  Whose dying breath arraigns

"The low assassins under
  Whose strokes I'll lose my life,
O Lord! Pour forth your thunder,
Let your hand rift assunder
  The clouds above this strife."

He died alone. Forgotten?
  Oh no, God ne'er forgets.
This deed so foul and rotten,
By greed for gold begotten,
  Soon fell in Justice' nets.

The murderers now fleeing
  Did tremble oft in fear,
For everywhere, when seeing
A crane, a harmless being
  Their fright did reappear.

Forgetting of the danger,
  Or thinking out aloud,
"Behold, the fateful ranger,
Of Ibicus, the stranger,"
  Cried one, "who vengeance vowed."

Too late. They were detected,
  And none the crime denied,
To searching trial subjected,
The punishment effected
  Was swift and justified.

Alas! for those whose doing
  The light of day must fear.
An avenger pursuing,
All thoughts in us accruing —
  Is always, ever near.

This avenger, never sleeping,
  Is conscience, known to all,
Its sting (not cranes a sweeping
High in the air) came creeping,
  And caused the robber's fall.

SOLITUDE

When man unkind, or cruel stroke
  Of fate thy soul embitter,
When criticized by heartless folk
  Who praise all things that glitter
(Their ignorance oft makes them rude),
Then heed me, friend, seek solitude.

When envy tries to undermine
  Thy lifework, kind and blameless,
And mental dwarfs, who aim to shine
  In deeds both worth— and nameless,
With wisdom of their kind intrude,
Then seek, oh friend, seek solitude.

When narrowness thy broader ways
  Of thinking tries to fetter,
And for itself claims all light's rays,
  And boasts of being better;
Then, friend of mine, I say elude,
Go hence and seek for solitude.

When discords of a serious kind
  Within thy heart should rankle,
And demons fierce, thy head, thy mind,
  Thy arm, thy foot and ankle,
With passion shake, I should conclude
Thy safest cure is solitude.

Yes, solitude's the panacea,
  I prize for every trouble,
Of young or old. 'Tis my idea
  That it good cheer will double;
In Nature's arms I oft reviewed
My childhood joys in solitude.

IN MEMORY OF EMILIE BAUER

Emilie dear, our darling,
  Cut short is thy life in its bloom.
The lark and the blithe meadow-starling,
  Are mourning for thee now in gloom.
Your voice ever sweet and most charming,
Has yielded to grief's sting, alarming.

The forests and woodlands will miss thee,
  And the brook in its murmuring sound,
Will join the bright sunbeams which kissed thee,
  Lamenting for thee, who hath wound
A wreath of bright virtues, whose charm
Will Fate's cruel menace disarm!

The zephyr, his sport now suspending,
  Caresses no longer thy brow;
The sounds e'er thy footsteps attending
  Are hushed, and not cheering us now;
Thy paths here on earth are forsaken;
Since God to himself thee hath taken.

Your parents and kindred most sadly,
  Will miss thee, now sick at their heart;
The roses and lilies, who gladly
  Their fragrance to thee did impart,
Are lonesome without thee, and languish,
And bowing their heads in their anguish.

The hawthorn, the roadside adorning,
  E'er watching thy fleet foot pass by;

The cowslips, your love never scorning,
  The cloudlets which float in the sky —
All loved thee, but weep now in sorrow,
Nor grudge thee thy brighter To-morrow.

The storm in its rage and its fury,
  Will harmless pass over thy grave;
From hardship, from sickness, penury,
  Did God in his kindness thee save;
All ills of this life in death ending,
No longer thy peace are offending.

The universe grand and imposing,
  God made, and again can undo;
The stars in the heavens disclosing
  Their glorious brightness to you
Must end at His bidding and crumble —
Yet saved are the true and the humble.

Emilie dear, our darling,
  We'll follow, and join thee all soon,
The lark and the blithe meadow starling,
  The winds and the light of high noon,
All await God's command, and will fall,
If such is His will, at His call.

AS FAR AS IT GOES

"Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us,
To see oursels as ithers see us."— *Burns.*

As far as it goes, 'twould be a fine thing,
To see ourselves as others, and fling
Aside the conceit which befogs our brain,
And discard our follies in wrath and disdain.

But mind ye, oh friends, that others may err,
In judging our virtues; your verdict defer;
From outward appearance, which often misleads,
Man forms his opinion of other men's deeds.

They see not the motive which leads you to act,
They know not the power which tends to contract
Oft harmful designs, and turns the flood
From evil to good, or from water to blood.

They'll raise oft the scoundrel to honors on high,
While deriding the pure, the honest, and fly
To rescue the knave. And thus you see
The judgment of men is sad mockery.

As far as it goes, 'twould be a fine thing —
But to see ourselves as God does, the King
Who ne'er is mistaken, nor ever has erred —
'Twould be a great favor, undreamed of, unheard.

(No disrespect toward the great poet Burns is meant by the above, as the author only enlarged upon the well-laid foundation of Burns.)

THE CYCLONE

Whence comest thou from, and where dost thou go?
O king of destroyers, most terrible guest!
Which is the power that causes thy flow,
And what the condition that puts thee to rest?

Thy voice is the terror of every creature,
Thy aim is destruction, thy follower, death;
Devastation and ruin, thy general feature,
Despair is the angel which follows thy breath.

Like strugling Cyclops, who carelessly trample
The worm in the dust, without intent,
So dost thou cruelly kill, without ample
Warning, all beings, till thy fury is spent.

Unconscious destroyer, great is thy power,
Thou fillest all hearts with awe and fear;
At thy approach the bravest will cower,
And feigned bravado will disappear.

Though called a destroyer, and worthy that name,
Thou art but a bungler compared with men;
Who, ferocious and beast-like, will inflame,
The hatred of nations, of city, or glen.

Thou art a terror, but men in thy path,
Like vultures will follow, and oh the shame,
Will steal the gift which the merciful hath
Donated unselfish in humanity's name;

Will steal from the poor, and hyena like,
  Devour the helpless, and tramp down the weak;
Oh merciful God, why dost Thou not strike,
  And on these cravens, Thy vengeance wreak?

O merciful God! The fire and storm,
  The flood in its fury, are a matter of chance;
But the human hyena, e'er loth to conform,
  To thy sacred commandment, doth ruthless advance,

And vampire like, regardless of right,
  Defies Thy laws, and from his prey,
His helpless prey, in his sorrow and plight,
  Sucks the last drop of blood away.

Thy forbearance, O Lord, we cannot doubt,
  And Thy wisdom supreme needs no defense.
But why, O Lord, I ask Thee devout,
  Should avarice pollute thy creation immense?

(After a fearful cyclone had destroyed the unfortunate town of Pomeroy, in Iowa, many of the appointed officers put a large share of the money received in trust into their own pockets.)

SORROW

Steel thy heart when sorrow meets thee,
  Flee thou not in useless speed.
None escapes, and none who greets thee,
  Ever baffled sorrow's greed.
Sorrow's sway, and sorrow's power,
Undisputed o'er us lower.

Think thou not, that care and sorrow,
In mankind's dregs alone are found.
I to-day, and you to-morrow,
Feel its gnawing hear its sound.
Princes proud, with treasures blessed,
Feel its scourge, and find no rest.

Cohorts of minor servants follow
Sorrow in its daily path.
Groundless fear, perversions hollow,
All upon thee wreak their wrath.
All unite, and none they spare,
All entrap thee in their snare.

Ranks defying, sorrow wanders
O'er the earth, no favorite
On whom it ever mercy squanders;
Its realm is vast, and infinite.
Sorrow comes, and plans are blasted,
And cherished hopes we find dismasted.

In duty's service, every tilt
Counts and is a mighty ally,
In consciousness that free from guilt,
Let thy timid spirit rally.
Steel thy heart, and never waver,
When sorrow comes, the wrinkle graver.

LOVE'S DEATH

SHE:

My heart is with him,
With him is my mind.
From weeping are dim
My eyes. I have pined
Without avail:
My courage doth fail.

I'll die in despair,
Unless a kind fate,
Or an angel most fair
Will vanquish his hate:
He once did love me
In highest degree,

But I trifled with him,
(O sword, seek thy sheath)
And remorse most grim
With relentless teeth
Gnaws in my heart,
Oh woe is my part!

HE:

At the morning sun's rise
And the evening sun's set,
Regret doth surprise,
Myself, and yet,
She knew I was true,
But could not subdue

Her wicked impulse
To give me sore pain,
So she tried to convulse
My heart, true and plain,
By flirting with men,
Within my ken.

Her object, no doubt,
Was selfish and wrong,
And none but a lout
Would join in a throng
Of amorous swains,
Where folly reigns.

To fasten her sway
O'er me was her aim.
But she killed every ray
Of Love's clear flame;
And when love is dead,
All illusions have fled.

WHY SHOULD NO LIVING BEING SAVE MAN HAVE A SOUL?

Presuming, selfish man!
Thy arrogance,
Luxuriance,
Forstalls thy Maker's plan.
A soul thou claimest for thyself,
While horse and dog, part of thy pelf,
Must die, a soulless span.

A friend within thy sight
Who loves and fears
God, and adheres
To maxims, fair and right,
Will treat his poor, dependent beast
With love, or gentleness at least,
With hand both kind and light.

The neighbor at thy left,
Whose heart of stone
Ne'er will atone
For wounds his hand hath cleft;
Most merciless, with brutal zeal
Maltreats God's creatures, whose appeal
Finds him of sense bereft.

Thy answer is, no doubt,
That God, the just,
In wrath will thrust,
The brute into the spout
Which leads to him whom myth adorns,
(Prince Satanas) with hoofs and horns,
With tail and fiery knout.

So far, 'tis good and well.
But tell me, pray,
Who will repay
The beast, whose doleful yell
Will die unheard. Who will requite
The innocent, who did excite
Thy wrath, thou food of hell?

Who will repay, I ask,
The soulless brute,
Helpless and mute,

Whose life is but one task
  Of servitude, of joyless toil,
  A chain of hardship and turmoil?
Down, feigner, with thy mask!

A MYTHOLOGICAL ORGY

Serenely the stars were twinkling,
  Preparing for the ball,
While a mysterious inkling,
  From unseen lips did fall,
And a generous incense sprinkling
  All senses did enthrall.

The universe illum'ed
  With myriads of torches;
Zephyr-like clouds, perfumed,
  Subdued the heat which scorches;
When Jupiter Rex assumed
  His stand on Elysium's porches.

Graciously, as ever,
  He welcomed every guest;
Mars, richly dressed and clever,
  Led by his side one blest
With charms that none could sever
  From Venus, the loveliest.

The lions of society
  And gnomes both large and small,
Of spirits a variety,
  Did answer the roll-call,
And bowed with due propriety;
  But hark! What a sudden squall!

At first it seemed a riddle —
  The din could move a stone;
Boreas in the middle
  Stood, tuning his trombone,
And Urania, whose fiddle
  Was wailing, held her own.

Apollo, the great sire
  Of music, beat the time,
And Orpheus with his lyre
  Fell in, with strains sublime;
He tamed both shrieks and ire
  With his harmonious chime.

The dance was soon progressing
  Terpsichore did guide;
Fortuna, with a blessing,
  Joined in the rhythmic slide;
Though a hundred eyes possessing,
  Swam Argus with the tide.

Aurora, too, and Isis
  Were found within the throng,
And even good Osiris,
  And Hercules the strong.
Poseidon at this crisis,
  Delighted, swung his prong.

To Bacchus oft appealed
  The mirthful in their glee,
And those in sorrow kneeled
  On Lethe's banks so free,
Their thirsting souls, which reeled
  From guilt to misery.

Naiads, sirens, muses,
All living and the dead,
Resumed without excuses
Or plea, their former tread.
Though Nemesis her abuses
In showers o'er them shed.

The limbs of Pan in their socket
Were skipping like a fawn.
Next off went, like a rocket,
Morpheus, with a yawn,
And the moon, with hand in pocket,
Complacently looked on.

Yet, every beginning
Must also end, disband.
Old Sol stepped forth, and grinning,
He three times clapped his hand,
And the misty phantoms, spinning,
In Tartarus did land.

WHY REPINE?

Cheer up, my friend, why thus corrode?
Oppressed, no doubt, by secret load,
Your mind gives way to brooding.
Again, cheer up! Be not a slave
Of chance — for surely time will lave
Your woes, on the intruding.

Affliction comes, at every chance,
Deriding time and circumstance,
Nor humble prey despising.

The rich and strong are not exempt
From sorrow, pain, or from contempt
(Oft a deserved chastising).

Yet, friend, stand firm, although oppressed,
Your ailings soon may be redressed,
Quit only woe compiling.
And do not grumble or repine;
Your neighbor's lot is worse than thine,
Yet is he always smiling.

The burdens which our spirits bend,
If magnified, with gloom will blend,
All our thoughts arresting.
But if resisted and subdued,
Compared with blessings since accrued —
No longer are molesting.

Most ills of life in which all share,
Which drive their victims to despair,
Are not real but seeming.
And happy he, whose buoyant soul
Is master e'er, who can control
And overcome Fate's scheming.

Happiness and pain can dwell
In peace together — let me tell
A secret, reconciling;
If thou thyself dost happy feel,
The views of others ne'er can steal
The joy upon thee smiling.

AMERICA

America, dear native land,
O land so noble, free and grand!
"I sing this song to thee."
For thee, for thee! With hand and heart,
I pray to God, may ne'er depart
Thy liberty.

For thee, thy sons and daughters brave,
Will carry with them to the grave,
A love most holy and divine.
And every wife and every man,
Would sacrifice their dearest plan
Before our native shrine.

To heaven's care, thy soil, thy air,
Thy mountains, lakes, and streams so fair,
Most earnestly I do commend.
God, the just, has ever blessed
Our native land from east to west,
From north to south, from end to end.

But ho! What glorious bird is this?
A soaring over precipice,
And mountains steep and high?
'Tis not a vulture on a prowl,
'Tis not a falcon, nor an owl,
A roaming in the sky.

What means the glittering arrow-crest,
And what the banner on its breast,
As with the stars and stripes it flies?

'Tis our Eagle on the wing,
A keeping guard, and everything
  Within his sight in safety lies.

Oh royal bird, so strong and grand!
Oh, ne'er forsake our native land,
  Our land so brave and free.
America! With hand and heart
We pray to God, may ne'er depart
  Thy liberty.

A TALE

Once an old hero bold,
Chief of the Arquanold,
Up in the highest wold,
  Camped with his band.
In war with another tribe,
Whose chief, with a sneering gibe,
Once dauntingly did inscribe
  A war ax in sand.

The Arquanold warriors who
For strife ever ready, flew
To vanquish and to subdue
  Their insolent foe.
Just where we are resting now,
Away from the summit's brow,
On corpses, a fearful mow,
  Did the rising sun glow.

For our old hero chief,
In battle, both fierce and brief,
Had routed and brought to grief,
  The enemy bold.
In horror, the rising sun,
Shone on the night's work done,
Ghastly, and fit to stun
  Those who did it behold.

Alluni, the chieftain's child,
Virtuous, gentle, mild,
The "prairie's pure lily" styled,
  Descended the hill.
In pity she onward moved,
By warriors fierce reproved,
But quiet, as it behooved,
  In compassionate thrill.

In pity, now multiplied,
She on the bare ground espied
A foe who still death defied,
  With a deep bleeding wound.
Trying her thoughts to trace,
He slowly raised up his face,
With features of rarest grace,
  But instantly swooned.

A grim warrior, standing near,
Furiously grasped his spear,
And aimed, with an ugly sneer,
  At his noblest part.
But Alluni, swift as a flash
Which precedes the loud thunder's crash,
With a bound, an impulsive dash,
  Covered his heart.

The spear struck her shoulder plate,
And pinned her to him, whose fate
She tried to alleviate,
  Discarding all fear.
Her father shook like a leaf;
Frantic with pain and grief,
And hastened to her relief,
  Withdrawing the spear.

Then up stood the maiden brave,
And grasping an arrow, grave
Words from her lips did wave
  In the balmy cool air.
"With this sharpened arrow point,
Which skilful hands did annoint,
With poison, I'll prick my joint,
  And quench my despair."

"Unless, dearest father, thou
Wilt pledge with a sacred vow
To spare the youth swooning now,
  From death and all plague."
The chieftain, 'twixt fear and hate,
Yearning his wrath to sate,
Tried to equivocate,
  In words rather vague.

But seeing the arrow glist,
Near her denuded wrist,
He vowed, and a sudden mist
  Her mind did enshroud.
True to his sacred pledge,
The chief did no longer hedge,
But ground down his hatred's edge,
  So haughty and proud.

Both scorning vile pills or broth,
Recovered, and pledged their troth,
And to love turned the chieftain's wrath,
  Ere the full moon turned pale.
And when the old hero died,
The Arquanold in their pride,
Elected Chief Lightning-Stride —
  And here ends the tale.

TAKE PRIDE IN THY CALLING

Take pride in thy calling, oh mortal,
  Or failure will surely attend thee.
With letters of gold o'er thy portal
  Mark plainly, distinctly, and handy,
    Vocation and calling,
    With neatness, not sprawling,
  And all will consider thee "sandy."

Have faith in thy doctrine, or scoffers
  Thy teaching in slime pits will draggle.
Aim higher than filling thy coffers
  With treasure, or sure thou wilt straggle
    From the path of success;
    If not, faith limitless
  Will raise thee o'er trifling and haggle.

HUMAN NATURE

Not all is bad that we despise,
Nor all that like the cream doth rise
  Should we admire.
The human mind, like all on earth,
Is imperfect. Abundance, dearth,
Our griefs and joys, and harmless mirth,
  Like a hot fire,
Our hearts do mark
Now light, now dark,
  With love or ire.

We struggle hard, and take due pains
That in our lines, our skill attains
  The highest ranks.
Yet, though we strain in ceaseless toil,
Our powers all, and ne'er recoil
From honest work in life's turmoil,
  We draw but blanks.
But others gain
What we would fain
  Accept with thanks.

With seeming ease, some make a name.
We persecute them, and defame
  Their fair repute,
For envy is the demon dark
Who aims at every shining mark,
As doth the seaman at the shark,
  Most resolute.
When their life's spent
Their monument
  We execute.

TOO LITTLE OF ANYTHING IS BUT A CURSE

The love we retain for our kindreds' sole use
  Of right doth belong to all beings that breathe.
God's less-favored creatures, we ever abuse,
  And crown ourselves with an ill-bestowed wreath.
Neglecting the needy, our chattels we nurse;
Too little of anything is but a curse.

Oft haters of evil, whose courage doth fail,
  Who waver for fear when a crisis they meet,
Will yield to corruption, and faint-hearted quail
  When firmness would stagger, and force to retreat
The enemy shamming, whose valor's still worse;
Too little of anything is but a curse.

There are cases where plenty, which ne'er doth abate,
  May smother of ever-prized kindness the germ,
Which thrives while fulfilling impulses innate,
  Whose lamp is ne'er lacking the oil or the sperm.
Yet vain all endeavors, if slim our purse;
Too little of anything is but a curse.

If each in his backyard had gold to scoop up,
  The Klondike and Rand would be left to their fate.
And Death would discard soon the bane-brimming cup
  Of gold, which doth strife and dissention create.
Ah, had we but more, we'd gladly disburse;
Too little of anything is but a curse.

LATER POEMS

YESTERDAY

Where are the joys which us beguiled,
  When love and simple virtues reigned,
And vanities left undefiled
  Our mind, and our heart unstained?
Where are these joys which none could stay,
The joys of vanished yesterday?

Where is the work of long ago,
  Which, slowly plodding, we pursued,
And still had leisure to bestow
  Profounder thoughts on what we woo'd,
While we to-day, e'en hastening pray,
Where is the work of yesterday?

Where is the strength distinguishing
  The past, in deeds and thoughts expressed?
Though rudely fashioned, everything
  Had lasting worth and stood the test.
Where is the strength, which did betray
The trend of bygone yesterday?

Where is the sham-despising pride,
  Which stoops not in a vain desire
The jewel, truth, alas, to hide
  Beneath misleading, false attire?
Where is the crown, in worth's array,
Where is the pride of yesterday?

COMPENSATION

The laws of compensation,
  Not few, but manifold,
Do equalize what otherwise
  Would be a wrong untold.

One may possess vast riches,
  Yet doth he miss a child
Whose babble cheers, and dries our tears —
  For hearts must be beguiled.

And he, penury's victim,
  Whom fate so much neglects,
Oft mourns and grieves — his child retrieves
  For him all such defects.

Some never knew their parents,
  Nor did their love accost.
Yet recompense saves woe intense —
  The unknown can't be lost.

Great intellects e'er straying
  Into mind's silent realm
Gain joys unknown to the idle drone,
  And woes to overwhelm;

While he whose mind is clouded
  Is happy in his way;
Not high nor deep his aims do creep,
  For small stakes doth he play.

Sin may enhance our status,
  And transient profits bring;
Yet sin begets no violets,
  But thorns to smart and sting.

He who has few possessions
  Can lose but few at last,
While others may see much decay
  If much they have amassed.

The laws of compensation
  With God's hand keep apace,
Each gets his share of joy and care,
  Best suited in his case.

Were all alike in riches,
  In health, and wisdom's way,
Progress would halt, and sloth exalt,
  And striving minds decay.

The gift of understanding
  The King of mortal kings,
Alone can claim; He knows his aim,
  But we are helpless things.

TO BABY CARMEN

Composed January 29, 1905, in honor of little Carmen Eggerth, just six months old, weight 16 pounds.

Baby, now a polliwog,
  Has bright eyes, e'er peeping;
Baby, like a little log,
  Rolling o'er, is keeping
All her secrets to herself,
And delights in colored pelf,
  Laughing now, then weeping.
Baby, now a polliwog,
Soon will be a little frog,
  Creeping, ever creeping.

Baby, now a little elf,
  Keeps on growing, growing;
And intrudes her little self,
  Where joy is gifts bestowing.
Baby, oh, thy tricks are vain,
Yet do they each one entertain,
  Be calm, the winds are blowing.
Baby, yet a little elf,
All doth claim, from floor to shelf,
  With bulging eyes, and glowing.

TO BYRON

Byron, oh Bryon, an error most grievous,
'Twas when thou didst mention thy critic by name,
Whose small pricking arrows could never, believe us,
Thy merit diminish, nor darken thy fame.
The aim of the well-known sly burgher of Edin
Was doubtless to keep his own lustre from fadin'.

All critics I'd liken to mirrors, and looking-
Glasses, quite worthless, if left in the dark.
The light must fall on them before they — oft shocking —
Can mar and distort, or leave a true mark.
There are mirrors and mirrors, some faultless and polished,
And others but worthy of being demolished.

The hen needs must cackle, but the egg she has laid
May pass as excuse for the needless ado;
But critics unfruitful, like leeches, invade
The realm of their betters, most ruthless, in lieu
Of mending their spirit, unfruitful and sear,
Of creating, self-active, or seeking the rear.

When wine becomes sour, and worthless to drink,
It drops to the rank of best vinegar;
But critics, e'er trying reputations to sink
Can never fall lower from where they now are.
The author or poet embraced by the critic
Reminds me of oak trees and plants parasitic.

Byron, oh Byron, 'twas an error to wrest
From oblivion, a name foredoomed sure to fade.

Merit will rise while the masses digest
The works of thy mind, but dwindle to shade
In spite of all puffs by the critic employed,
Thy efforts will soon, if of merit devoid.

TO MY FRIEND, GEORGE W. HANNA

(For whom the author erected a fine residence.)

The job is done, the keys are thine,
To lock each door. To thee assign
I now each chest and every fixture,
From attic roof to cellar floor —
Dimensive now thy will. Explore
At leisure thou the mixture.

May comfort, warmth, a cheery smile,
Thy outward man each day beguile,
When business cares thee tire.
And may thy inner man rejoice
At deeds of love, to those whose voice
To thee appeal in their desire.

For kindness, friend, which we impart,
Ne'er leaves a sting in thine own heart —
It is God's first and greatest boon —
A duty, too, for weak and frail
Are mortal men; few can avail
Themselves of gifts which flee too soon.

Should e'er thy mind (I truly doubt it)
Mean flattery or fawners' plaudit
Pervert, and cause thy spirits rise,

Then rise thou too, scale wall and roof,
Far o'er the earth from all aloof —
  None could men's smallness there disguise.

The works of God, immense and grand,
In glorious garb before thee stand.
  Thy spirits droop, thou seest clear,
Not to possess, but to improve,
Kind Nature's gifts, it doth behoove
  The creature, man, in his career.

But should ill health or loss of wealth,
Or other griefs, in secret stealth
  Thy spirits cause in woe to droop,
Then, friend of mine, do not despair,
Stand firm, erect, and then compare
  Thy lot with those who always stoop.

Adversity will cause thine eye
To read men's hearts, and thus descry
  Much silent worth, before not seen;
And Nature's face, God's manuscript,
Thou then canst read, with eyes equipped
  To see in darkness, clear and keen.

Adversity thine ear will train
To list, in patience to the strain
  Of those whom life ne'er brought a joy;
The lisping winds, the roaring sea,
Will clearer, louder, speak to thee:
  "Adversity means not alloy."

Let ne'er thy better judgement swerve
From what thy heart found true. Preserve
  The cream of all which stood the test;

An honest foe who with strong arm
Thy brow attacks will do less harm
  Than hidden claws, which thee caressed.

The man, not dress; the deed, not word,
Compels respect, we ever heard.
  A seeming fall may mean thy rise,
Not always seen by man, the thrall
Of circumstances, apt to fall,
  As Adam fell in Paradise.

And when thy life-clock has run down,
Go hence in peace. May thy renown
  Be such that those who know thee best
May pray sincere, in grief and tears,
"O Lord, spare him yet twenty years";
  Then will thy memory be blessed.

At last, my friend, good cheer be thine
(Philosophers ne'er do repine).
  In every state, each day and year.
And to thy loved ones, kith and kin,
I wish the same, and peace within,
  Again I say to thee, "Good cheer."

THE GOLDEN MEAN

The Christian and the heathen
  Each preaches and proclaims
His own perplexing doctrine,
  Which covers all his aims.
And I, who speechless worship
  At the All-Mother's shrine,
I'm seeking for a guidepost,
  Yet fail to see its sign.

I've seen them worship idols,
  And am to blame myself,
If it is vain, pernicious,
  To cling to transient pelf.
I've groped and searched unceasing
  For truths which are divine;
I'm seeking for a guidepost,
  Yet fail to see its sign.

Should I my conscience smother,
  And ape the thoughtless throng,
Who judge all things by seeming,
  And turn the right to wrong?
Or pass as "crank" molested
  By folly's grand combine?
I'm seeking for a guidepost,
  Yet fail to see its sign.

Should I for wealth and riches
  E'er strive in ruthless zeal,
That I, as open-handed
  Myself may yet reveal?

Or should as helpless pauper,
My goodness I define?
I'm seeking for a guidepost,
Yet fail to see its sign.

Should I, who sees but riddles,
Ask others them to solve?
Or should my finite knowledge
New theories evolve?
Alas, I am but human,
And life, a boundless mine;
I'm seeking for a guidepost,
Yet fail to see its sign.

IT CANNOT LAST

Let e'er thy watchword be:
"It cannot last,"
Stand firm, stand fast,
Abide by God's decree.
Then wilt thou ne'er a victim fall
To innate insolence a thrall,
Nor to despair's strong plea.

Should dangers thee pursue,
Stand firm, stand fast,
It will not last.
Be brave, and strong, and true,
The clouds which hide the sun to-day
To-morrow shall have ebbed away,
And peace will bide with you.

Doth beauty thee adorn,
  Stand firm, stand fast,
  It cannot last,
To waste, all things were born.
  Thy outward grace, cause of thy pride,
  May vanish soon, and not abide,
And give thee cause to mourn.

Should you abound in joy,
  Stand firm, stand fast,
  It cannot last:
All things will fade, alloy,
  The lips so sweet, the hands so warm,
  Which oft caressed thy yielding form
May soon grim death decoy.

Hast riches thou, oh man?
  Stand firm, stand fast,
  It can but last
As long as your life's span.
  The treasures which with zeal we hoard,
  May vanish e'er death's ruthless sword
Lays low us, pale and wan.

When death at last thee meets,
  Stand firm, stand fast!
  Death will not last:
Death ne'er God's aim defeats.
  To mould will turn the empty shell;
  Our works and deeds the truth will tell,
The truth which life completes.

WELCOME

(Read before a gathering in the new residence of the author.)

My gentle wife for whom I've planned
This new abode, with head and hand,
  Has left me far too soon;
A better home, an endless home,
A home with God beneath his dome,
  Is now her cherished boon.

And you, my friends, who did abide,
When fate had robbed me of my bride,
  And grief my soul bent down,
For you my thanks, my heart-felt thanks,
  I shall retain, until your ranks
  Are broke by death's grim frown.

No more of this. To-night we're here
To while away in right good cheer,
  As oft in olden time,
The fleeting moments of the night,
Amid the games and sayings bright,
  And hear the music chime.

Welcome, friends, I welcome you;
May merrily the time pursue
  Its flight within my hall;
May, when my threshold you have passed
Your sleep with soothing dreams be massed;
  Aye, welcome, one and all.

TO EMMA

Dearest wife, although departed,
Thy spirit still is lingering nigh.
Thou hast been my hope and anchor
When the waves were rolling high;
Thou hast been my pride and honor,
In the years that have gone by.

Gentle wife, thy deeds and actions
Never left a pain or sting,
And thy love and thy affections
Never were found wavering;
Thou hast cheered thy husband's summer,
And hast blessed thy children's spring.

Sweetest wife, oh, not forgotten,
Wilt thou be, for whom I moan;
And a monument more precious
Shalt thou have, than marble stone,
In the heart of him who loved thee,
As only he loved thee alone.

THE DYING STRAINS OF ALEXANDER THOMPSON

(This happened at Dubuque, Iowa, 1899.)

A train was wrecked. What matters
  The loss sustained in rolling stock,
Had not a brave man suffered
  A searching pain and deadly shock?
Wedged up against the boiler,
  Which smoke belched forth, and scorching heat,
Poor Alexander Thompson
  Was found, destined thus death to meet.

Despite of all exertions
  To free the martyr, sore and bruised,
In dreadful straits, and hopeless,
  All was in vain. Though each refused,
He begged without cessation,
  To end his misery and pain;
Then tones most sweet came flowing
  In one continuous, mellow strain.

They flowed from lips scarce able
  To move, from being cracked and charred,
They touched, like angel's voices,
  The list'ners' hearts, who could retard
Their grief and pain no longer.
  "My old Kentucky home, good night,"
He sang, and Death's dark shadows
  Gave way to hope of coming light.

Though weak and ever weaker,
"My old Kentucky home, good night,"
He sang, and deepest sadness,
His farewell strain did thus invite.
All bowed their heads, still trying
To ease him in his woe and blight;
Once more he breathed, dying,
"My old Kentucky home, good night."

LIFE EVERYWHERE

(Inspired during a steamboat trip on the Mississippi, June 16, 1907.)

Our lives intertwine like the billows,
Which ever their level do seek.
The low lifts the high even higher,
And the strong shares his strength with the weak.

The ripple we see on the surface,
Disguises a struggle below,
And a countenance outwardly beaming,
May hide a most trying heart-throe.

The wavelets which restless are skipping,
Uniting again soon to part,
Like human aims, growing, declining,
Are submerged at a greater wave's start.

And yet is essential each billow,
And human endeavor doth count,
E'en though its beginning be modest,
The crest in life's stream to surmount.

The pulse beat, the swell, and the heaving,
  Emotions which never find rest,
God's presence proclaim most impressive,
  To those who with insight are blessed.

We judge by external appearance,
  Neglecting the depth to explore,
Of men and of swift-flowing waters,
  Embraced by their limiting shore.

The snags and infirmities hidden,
  The shoals and the fathomless pits,
We notice too late for retreating
  When fate in her judgement-chair sits.

To trust in a stranger unwisely,
  To ride on a stream which deceives,
Is courting disaster, which greedy
  And watchful, its spider-net weaves.

But to cling to the tried and the faithful,
  And to cherish the true without stint,
Betokens a judgement which doubtless,
  Was coined in fair wisdom's own mint.

HOARDING

Aye, hoard we must and will, all times, it seems,
(An oft misused impulse). One hoards the beams
Of every gladness, and e'er strives in zeal
To wrest from Fate its sting, while his ship's keel
Divides the clouds which ever hang in gloom
Above most men, in age and in youth's bloom.
His helping hand, which tireless imparts
Kind gifts, is potent in unselfish arts.
Each tear he dries, his noble soul extends,
And to his countenance new sweetness lends.
His sole reward, which gratifies beyond
All parallel, he finds within the bond
Which chains him to the one blessed by his aid,
And, miser-like, he revels in the shade
Of former deeds. Full hundred-fold, his years
Are blessed with fruit, of Mercy's golden ears.

Another here we find, who hoards his grief,
The common grief of all, though short and brief.
He magnifies, with artful master-touch
Each tiring pain, not recognized as such
By braver men. His one inglorious aim,
His narrow ruling thought, is to inflame
Anew the dying embers of despair.
And when exhausted his own grief and care,
His woeful eye, in search for greener fields,
Dismays his friends, whose cheerful aspect yields
Not willingly, yet, like the mildewed mist,
His presence blights each joy: naught can resist —

What his reward? Ah, what does he deserve?
A somber life can scarce from darkness swerve,
God's brightest rays are not for one who hath
A gloomy eye. His is the aftermath.

Another hoards his baseless, vaunting pride.
In channels deep, obscure, it e'er doth glide,
By none discerned, seen only by his eye,
Which ever dreads the searching probe to ply,
For fear to prick a bubble, where he stored
His idle dross, by him alone adored.
Such attributes as we in others find
Well merited call forth his hatred blind.
His only aim is not "E'er to outdo,"
But "to outshine" the common earthly crew.
What recompense should God on him bestow?
Whose shallowness doth higher aims forgo?
Enduring fame is not for one like him;
A glittering outward show, his hollow whim
Attracts far more than wisdom's guiding shield;
His is the fruit-shorn, empty, stubblefield.

The last of all, the one God loves the least,
Is he whose greed for wealth oft shames the beast,
Which, when its gnawing want is stilled and quenched,
Gives way to those unfed. While he retrenched
The scanty means of those whom adverse fate
Left in his blight'ning reach. Accumulate,
Despite the laws which come from high above,
And hoard he must, e'en at the cost of love,
Which turns to hate, as day to night will change.
His avarice doth all his friends estrange;
He rules by fear, but should his fortune fall,
He's left alone, e'en now his passion's thrall.

While others sleep, or on the Sabbath day,
When stronger minds for light and wisdom pray,
His sordid thoughts still revel o'er his gold,
His only aim, for which all else he sold.
A fearful scourge, a phantom dark with gloom,
Is death to him — all earth-born mortals' doom.
The thought of death, like wrathful tempest's roar,
Strikes his declining years unto the core.
How can God one remunerate like him,
Whose love for self eclipsed his mental trim?
While memories of better men redound?
His is the hopeless, barren, stony ground.

GRANDPAPA

Grandpapa, my grandpapa,
I'm still a little man, but ah,
  I'm growing, yes, I'm growing.
Thy knee, I've reached it long ago,
And now I'm but a bit below
Your elbow when it's hanging low,
  And many things I'm knowing.

Grandpapa, my Grandpapa,
Upon your knees I'll ride, hurrah!
  How do I love careering!
When I am grown as tall as you,
A spur I'll buckle on my shoe,
And ride a horse, as others do,
  Not faltering nor fearing.

Grandpapa, my grandpapa,
When I am strong, with ax and saw,
  I'll help you daily, yearly.

I want to do all you do now;
I want to learn, oh, show me how!
A book to write, or guide a plow,
And I will love you dearly.

Grandpapa, my Grandpapa,
Your picture on my slate to draw,
A joy is, and a pleasure.
To watch each twinkle in your eye,
To see your smile, doth multiply
My joys, which sorrow's clouds defy —
I snatch each passing treasure.

PURSES AND PATRIOTISM

Purses and patriotism
Are much alike indeed,
Although no catechism
Taught ever such a creed.

When empty, the purses are carried
Open around in the hand,
But filled with treasure are buried
'Gainst thieves and fiery brand.

Patriotism resembles
A purse, no one denies,
The superficial trembles
While the genuine hidden lies.

Both patriotism and purses,
In times of need we test,
The empty, none e'er nurses,
While the opulent is blest.

LET THERE BE LIGHT

Slowly with the evening shadows,
  Fades and dies the weary day.
Far beyond the hills and meadows,
  Longing for his next relay,
Sinks the Sun-god, still reflecting
  Sunbeams blessed with warmth and life,
But the gloom of night, directing,
  Claims its right in stubborn strife.

Darkness, in its greed devouring,
  All that light made ever clear,
Must recede, though often lowering
  And unwilling, when light's sphere
In its panoply of glory
  Shining like a polished plate,
Rises and attacks the hoary
  Mist before Aurora's gate.

Likewise in the spirit human,
  Darkness finds a lodging place,
When our wisdom and acumen
  Are found wanting in life's race,
Which the soul of every creature
  Should adorn with graces rare,
Instead of being, mind and feature,
  Marked as lost to gloom's despair.

But when knowledge comes approaching,
  Strengthened by God's own essence,
Ignorance, before encroaching,
  Now must stand in self-defense.

Slowly, slowly, yet unfailing,
  Towards the ends by God ordained,
Hast'ning here, and elsewhere trailing,
  Knowledge frees the mind enchained.

Knowledge brings us joys, enhancing,
  While their source we learn to love;
Knowledge in its course advancing
  Points to hope and light above.
Ignorance and darkness tremble,
  Fearing that which they not know,
And they cling, while they dissemble,
  To all transient things below.

TO GENTLE KATE

This simple lay, devoid of art,
A tardy tribute of the heart,
  Whose spell of silence has been broken,
I do inscribe in grateful mood,
To pure and noble womanhood,
  As a, alas, deficient token.

And if I could, a song I'd sing,
The nightingale's tunes rivaling
  In sweetness and in truth and power;
And if the gift, thoughts to portray
In song were mine, I'd not delay,
  But touch my lute this very hour.

I'd sing their praise, whose worth I bless,
Who, lacking harshness, still possess,
  The choicest gift which heaven sendeth,

To lead aright, man's forces stern,
Which, though they're needful, we discern,
  Are wanting that which love but lendeth.

Men see the justice of a thing,
But women with them mercy bring,
  The remedy, which, when all faileth,
Where jarring discord doth abound
Or where the cries of woe resound,
  With its intrinsic worth prevaileth.

In youth, if they are led aright,
Their countenance reflects the light,
  Which in their inmost soul is beaming;
And like the flower which precedes
The coming fruit, their aspect leads,
  To hopes which in glad hearts are teeming.

Like tender buds which do adorn,
The rosebush in the early morn,
  Before the sun the zenith reaches;
Like blossoms pure, unspotted, fair,
Which with their fragrance fill the air,
  And charming like the bloom of peaches.

And later on, when life's demands
Their sphere of usefulness expands
  As wife and mother, children rearing,
Self-sacrifice, their chosen law,
Calls forth our gratitude and awe
  Toward ways most gentle and endearing.

And when rude men, whose vain dispute
Oft ends in war, their gains compute,
  They find at last, when they must settle,

That not the grim, opposing host,
But their own wives have suffered most,
And yet retained their loyal mettle.

And who will doubt God's final aim,
Whose love, the all-embracing flame,
Triumphantly in woman weaves?
Doth not the trend which they pursue
Bespeak for them a well earned due,
In realms where love its crown achieves?

CONSCIENCE, THE SAVIOR

The rushing stream, which onward speeds,
With skiff and bark,
No guidepost in its course e'er needs,
Nor other mark;
Yet in the end it finds its goal,
Since nature doth all things control.

And thou, enforced by reason's guide,
Which, after all,
Is but a staff to aid thy stride,
Or cause thy fall;
Thou shouldst thy conscience' voice ne'er scorn,
Whene'er thy staff leaves thee forlorn.

Thy conscience, framed to suit thy case,
Leads thee to God,
And mine, although less rich in grace,
Finds fruitful sod;
And though our paths apart us lead,
We both no other guide shall need.

Thy reason may lead towards the truth,
  Thy yearning soul,
While mine, misguided in my youth,
  Lack's wisdom's dole.
Yet if each faithful goes his way,
Not you nor I can go astray.

The realm of truth, none can invade,
  Not sage nor fools,
And daily see we doctrines fade
  Of former schools.
What our mind as truth perceives,
To change, an endless limit leaves.

Truth, love, and life, is He alone,
  Of all the cause.
And we, but creatures of a zone;
  Well may we pause,
Ere we proclaim, from doubtful ground,
That we the precious truth have found.

JULY FOURTH, 1895

'Tis true the fate
Of nations strong, rock-rooted seeming,
  Is doubtful like the fate of man;
To-day with pride our visage beaming,
  To-morrow, in despair we scan
Our fleeting hopes, still feebly gleaming,
  Which join destruction's caravan.

Vast kingdoms fell,
Still in their prime and utmost power,
  A prey to vices grave, severe.

They fell when God did seem to shower
His blessings on their self-closed ear;
They fell not by the hands that scour
The earth, and fill our hearts with fear.

They were brought low
By foes within their hearts and home,
Who stealthily did undermine
The corner-stone on which the dome
Of truth and happiness doth shine.
To enervation in its roam,
They fell a prey in their decline.

Let us all pray,
To-day, sincerely, that our land
Be spared for e'er from such a fate;
Let us all pray that virtue's band
Entwine our people, brave and great;
And that dissention's blasting brand
Be banished from our nation's gate.

Let us all hope
That time to our strength may add,
As years and centuries pass by;
And that the tree in hope be clad
On which our fathers did rely,
The tree of liberty, which had
A charm for all 'neath freedom's sky.

Oh, native land!
May ne'er thy honor, fame, subside,
As long as man on earth may dwell,
But may it, like the rising tide,
Constantly increase and swell;
Aye, to thy fame, we point with pride,
Thine enemies, we will repel.

LIFE

Like a whirling Charybdis without a rest,
Without repose or contentment blessed,
  Like grains of gladness with pounds of hope,
And tons of care, all mixed together;
Like lowering clouds in cheerless weather,
  Which hide the truth for which we grope:

Like a problem unsolved and undefined,
Like the goddess of Justice, who is blind,
  Like a streak of joy in sorrow's home,
That comes to mock each station and cast;
Like a link that joins our future and past,
  In the chain of fate and doom to come:

Like a chimerical were-wolf, which haunts our dreams,
Like a fluttering sunbeam, which is, or seems,
  A ray of wisdom which springs from the fount
That flows where He dwelleth, whom we revere;
Like a flash of intuition that'll disappear
  Ere we can grasp the thought profound —
    Such is Life.

HARMONY IN NATURE

The twilight gives way when the sun-ray approaches,
  And the dew seeks the chalice at evening's prime;
The song-bird's blithe carrol, when darkness encroaches,
  Upon the day's richness, is hushed for the time.
Each fills in its turn, and in its own season,
The duties assigned by a loftier reason.

The forest's calm voice, and the rills' rhythmic babble,
In harmonies blending, invite us to rest;
The web-foot, e'er eager to dive and to dabble,
Enlivens the outlook, enhancing the zest.
The pond ever courting the moonbeams so bright,
Is a spring of deep languor, and a source of delight.

The mountains, with summits the clouds overreaching,
Strike awe to the minds of the brave and devout,
And at their side nestles a shepherd's hut, preaching
Of hope and of faith in its sheltered redoubt.
The swift rushing waters, keep time with the storm,
Pulsating, they hasten their tasks to perform.

Verdure embellished, the meadows embolden
The rodent to venture his realms to explore;
The squirrel, improving the time rare and golden,
Enriches with judgement, his well-guarded store.
The bee, by her secret impulses impelled,
Doth gather that portion, from others withheld.

The elements, too, in their turn ever changing,
Bring home to our vision, sweet nature's accord,
For while the chilled snowflakes await their arranging
In sheets of white zephyr, she elsewhere doth hoard
The vapors yet liquid, which rise to descend,
To keep all in tune, or discordance to mend.

RULES AND FOOLS

Fools need rules, and rules make fools;
  And both will rhyme together.
Yet rules are often handy tools,
  'Mid frowning skies or pleasant weather.

The leader makes his rules to suit
  The work which doth amuse him,
The follower so sly and cute,
  Doth follow, or abuse him.

The former sees more sides than one,
  In every thing or question,
The latter, of the common run,
  Has mental indigestion.

An artist may achieve great fame
  With rules quite new and cunning;
Then comes a critic, weak and tame,
  Filled full and overrunning,

With vile abuse because his master
  Has left the worn-out highways;
Yet always dies this doom-forecaster
  In fame's forgotten by-ways.

A sorry lot, these knights of letters,
  Who, like the ivy creeper,
Cling for a living to their betters,
  For want of stay or sleeper.

Their breath of venom, too, resembles
Said creeper's blight'ning action;
Yet harmless like the leaf which trembles,
Are they in their distraction.

Aye, fools need rules, and rules make fools,
And when they meet and mingle,
You have the acme of all schools,
The critic plain and single.

THE ARCHITECT

(To T. H. Conner.)

Doubtless, in recesses hidden
In thy mind, but known to thee,
Thoughts arise, and stay unbidden
And are seldom prone to flee.
When in need of cheer, and tired,
In cohorts they seem to rise,
And, like clouds by tempests sired,
Aim your peace to sacrifice.

Doubtless, thou hast known the trials
Which the striving mind beset,
And hast often drunk from vials
Filled with envy and regret;
The former gathered up and hoarded
(Speaking in a metaphor),
By the grudger, who recorded
Outward seeming — nothing more.

Pigmies, gauged with thine own measure,
  Reaching scarcely to thy knee,
Sit behind a safe embrasure
  In stern judgment over thee.
Failing in their minds benighted
  To esteem your trying task,
Blind to merit, yet delighted
  In your hard-earned fame to bask.

Such are those whose envy blightens
  Many a blossom in your breast,
And regret your heartstrings tightens
  That 'tis all so manifest.
Burdens which but vex and tire
  Every leader must sustain,
'Though the fruit thou dost acquire,
  Is no less thy neighbor's gain.

All thy life may be devoted
  To the betterment of man,
Yet those who on follies doted
  With distain your doings scan;
Ah, regret, like pigeons homing,
  Leaves thee only to come back,
And thy weary soul, e'er roaming,
  Seeks for kindred spirit's track;

Spirits who, in walks more equal
  To thine own, are wont to move;
Spirits who — this is no sequel
  But the gist I hope to prove —
Who, I said, devoid of passion,
  Thy endeavors know to prize,
And not, as is modern fashion,
  Glittering trifles eulogize.

Painters who, in skill surpassing
All that liveth can portray;
Who their thoughts on canvas massing,
Show their fancy's choice display;
They, like thou, whose thoughts are leading
Far beyond all mortal ken,
In their works of art exceeding,
Preach a sermon to all men.

Sculptors, patient, slowly toiling,
Carve the marble dead and cold,
But, O wonder, Death, recoiling,
Flees, and charmed, we all behold,
Quickened by the artist's cunning
(Architects have done the same).
Life which flows to overrunning,
Almost breathing forth his name.

Music's masters, who, exalted,
Soar in realms by few attained,
Who proceed where others halted,
Are thy kindred, and have gained
For themselves renown unfading,
For the world enraptured joy,
While the sounds, the ear invading,
Reined and bridled, they employ.

Poets, sensitive to beauty,
Touched by all which joy or pain
Doth present, oft rise in duty
Wrongs to right, or peace to gain;
And, untrodden paths pursuing,
Sway the hosts which force withstood,
With a simple song, subduing
Wrath, thus turned from bad to good.

Thou, like poets, ever reaching
In your ever-fashioning mind
For new objects — thou art teaching
Not in words, but forms refined.
And congenial comrades brighten,
In their thoughtful intercourse,
Thy spare moments, and thus lighten
Loads, which thee from joy divorce.

Leading minds in each profession
Bear the brunt which weaklings shun,
Who — to use a trite expression —
Are found only "on the run."
Yet the solace which thy straining
Aimed toward ends both good and high,
In itself contains, e'er gaining,
Shall increase and multiply.

Treats are placed within thy grasping,
Which thy critics ne'er esteem,
Who, content with dross, are clasping
Closely to their bosom's seam
Chattels which in bulk commanding
Fill their sole and only thought,
While before thy mind are standing
High ideals, all self-wrought.

Ah, Regret! Your stings are trying!
When the best thou did'st produce
In thy course, with others vieing,
Brings a harvest of abuse.
Still, thine is the greatest blessing
Which the living ever cheers;
Thine the knowledge thee impressing,
That thou art known by thine own peers.

REASONING

Some folk, evading logic,
  Can prove that white is black,
And others, that the blackest
  Doth yet in darkness lack.
Some see, and see it plainly,
  That sunshime is but rain.
Ten reason with their wishes,
  While one consults his brain.

Some folks reach their conclusions,
  As Reynard doth the hen;
In other words, cupidity
  Doth lead them from their den.
They argue that the useful,
  If taken, leaves no stain.
Ten reason with their purses,
  While one consults his brain.

Some claim that God's existence,
  Is but a myth, a dream;
Yet swear that ghosts and phantoms
  In truth exist, not seem.
They manifest they see not
  While bound to error's bane.
Ten lean on superstition,
  While one consults his brain.

Some think that sweets and dainties
  Are treats without alloy;
And others call their bottle
  Their foremost source of joy.

Some smoke and chew tobacco,
  And call it only gain.
Ten reason with their stomach,
  While one consults his brain.

PROGRESSIVE EGOTISM AND ITS REBUKE

Said the plant, in accents taunting,
  "Mineral, thou shapeless clod,
Neither life nor death thou knowest;
  But I rise above the sod.
And I herewith do avow,
I am better far than thou!"

Said the beast, "Plant, how I pity
  All thy vain and baseless pride;
Look at me, thou fettered being,
  How I leap o'er chasms wide.
Stir thou dost — a storm-forced bow —
I am better far than thou."

Next spoke man, with scorn unblushing,
  For his color did forbid:
"I've a soul, and thou must perish,
  And beneath my coffin-lid
I shall live. Thou must allow,
I am better far than thou."

Spoke the white man, "Souls are trifles,
  Which no white man need respect,
And, enforced by sword and cannon,
  I my proper dues collect,
Which shall grace no colored brow —
I am better far than thou."

Lastly spoke the Anglo-Saxon,
"White or black, Mongol or Slav,
All are subject to my bidding,
Since I pounds and dollars have.
I proclaim it here and now,
I am better far than thou!"

Patiently God heard and listened,
To this thoughtless, idle cant;
And at last he spoke serenely,
"Man and beast, and clod and plant,
All do live, and naught can perish,
Save the thought of self and gain,
For my breath, my soul eternal,
Doth each atom entertain.

"Man to me is what a twig is
To the tree on which it grows;
And the clod on which man tramples,
Like a leaf in my sight glows;
Large or small, each thing or creature
Fills the place by me assigned,
And in worth all things are equal,
If with Me, the whole, combined.

"But a thing on self depending,
While abusing fellow clods,
Calls for pity, not for anger,
For it plants self-chast'ning rods.
Said not he, my foremost prophet,
'He who humbles self shall rise'?
And self-seekers in their blindness,
Serve themselves quite otherwise.

"I can change the state of beings;
Sage to-day in wisdom dressed,
Thou to-morrow mayst encumber
As a clod, earth's patient breast.
But each state with life is blessèd,
In a more or less degree,
And all things are good and perfect,
Since they all belong to me.

"Senses five has man, the foremost
Of My creature's on earth's globe,
While his lesser fellow beings,
From the whale to the microbe,
Are less gifted, yet are doing
All that I from them expect,
If their gifts they use untiring,
And speak their own dialect.

"If another sense were added,
Man, to those which now thee serve
Wouldst thou not in righteous horror,
From your present folly swerve?
Yet e'en ten, all potent senses,
Could my nature not decide;
For the fathomless to fathom,
I alone am qualified."

TRUTH

Oh friend, ne'er say, "This is the truth."
Your terms be qualified, forsooth:
  In such a plain construction,
We may employ both science, art;
And see a thing from end to start,
  Still err in its deduction.

The blind ne'er sees the lightnings flash,
The deaf's unfeeling to its crash;
  And those whose other senses
Are paralyzed, would doubtless claim
That sound and light alone e'er came
  With trusty evidences.

A sixth or seventh sense might teach
Us lessons new, yet our reach
  Would still embrace but little;
And what we learn through mortal means,
Of truth beyond death's darkened screens,
  Is less than jot or tittle.

Delusion is the foremost relish,
On which we thrive, which we embellish
  Most diligent forever.
It flatters us, its words ne'er mincing,
Although untrue, they are convincing,
  Most cunning, and most clever.

Truth, fathomless, did e'er invite
To introspection, and excite
  All knowledge-thirsting sages.

Her charms, most subtle, when once known,
Are fatal to delusions throne,
  Where short-lived falsehood rages.

But truth in part, not truth complete,
Can we conceive. Not always sweet
  Yet wholesome truths we're learning.
Eternal life is her's. Her path
Leads on to him, who ever hath
  An ear for our yearning.

DOES DRESS MAKE THE MAN?

When thou thy finest suit hast on,
  And cast aside thy plainer garb,
  In which to meet the thorn and barb
Which toil requires thou shouldst don,
  Then bows to thee, the fickle crowd,
  And sings thy praise, at least aloud.

And when again thou changest dress,
  The churls who did upon thee fawn,
  True to themselves, betray the spawn
From which they sprang in giddiness,
  By heaping on thee, black abuse,
  While wiser minds, worth's standards use.

The dress which fits the circumstance
  The wearer's saneness e'er reflects;
  And he who in vain pride expects
The world's good will thus to enhance
  Will find when he achievements counts,
  That ten times naught, to naught amounts.

SUNSHINE IN THE HEART

The hardships which each one encounters,
The trials which beset us here,
The woe and sorrow which forever
Pursue each mortal in his sphere,
They all must vanish and depart,
If we have sunshine in the heart.

The clouds which threat'ning o'er us hover,
The storm, whose fury doth appall,
The chilling blasts, all else congealing,
And evils which us all befall,
Are impotent right from the start,
If we have sunshine in the heart.

A trying loss, pain, and disease
We overcome, and wisdom gain,
Instead of pining evermore
For things from which we must abstain;
And we avoid grim fate's best dart
If we have sunshine in the heart.

By stern decrees we must abide,
Unalterable in their course,
And folly it would be to mourn
For things which will not yield to force;
All wounds will heal, though now they smart,
If we have sunshine in the heart.

Vain pride to its own level sinking,
Cannot affect a heart which fills,

Brave and undaunted, all its duties,
And meets with courage, all life's ills.
And we disaster's aims will thwart,
If we have sunshine in the heart.

THE ECHO

Ye cataracts roaring, ye brooklets and hills!
Ye winds unencumbered by sorrows and ills!
Ye meadows and flowers increasing and blessed!
Ye birds and ye sunbeams, whose aim and whose end,
To mock the dark shadows, I truly defend!
What state of the mind will ever bring rest?
Quoth the echo: "When blessed."

Ye sculptors, whose chisel your thoughts can portray,
Ye painters, though human, who seldom go stray,
Whose aim is perfection in beauty's own mart,
Ye poets, though humble, whose magic subdues
E'en man, the ferocious, who loves to abuse;
Where will, when all faileth, I surely find art?
Quoth the echo: "In heart."

Ye impotent idlers, ye drones in the hive,
Oft diligent nature, unable to dive
In wisdom's deep ocean, but willing to lurk;
Your indolent habits, of evil the source,
Are wanting in something to keep the right course,
Which even enriches the steed of the Turk.
Quoth the echo: "'Tis work."

Ye rich, yet unhappy, and ye who despair,
One's ailing is fullness, the other one's share,
  Though strong and in vigor, is ever to cope
With want, and the element's changing design;
Ye youthful and happy, and ye who decline,
  What is the most precious in life's changing scope?
    Quoth the echo: "'Tis hope."

Ye spirits e'er restless, in search for the new,
Like old Ahasverus, the Wandering Jew,
  Who aimless his lifetime in wayfaring spent,
What is it that's lacking, and causes unrest?
And robs ye of joys, which belong to the blest?
  And oft like a dagger, your heart-strings doth rent?
    Quoth the echo: "Content."

Ye dwellers of Northland, Equator's gay host,
Ye lads and ye lasses, of highland and coast,
  Ye parents, e'er sending petitions above,
Embracing your kindred, dependent and weak,
Ye children e'er yearning — what is it all seek,
  What is the enchantment, whose symbol the dove?
    Quoth the echo: "'Tis love."

AS WORTHLESS AS DUST

As worthless as dust, says the ignorant man,
When a thing of no value his eye doth scan;
For the thought that dust has no value at all
Is fixed in his mind, and then, withal,
An object so common, so cheap and unprized,
Seems worthless to him, and is despised.

But let us look closer, and carefully weigh
The value of dust — or call it clay —
For clay or dust is the substance of life
That builds our body in peace and strife;
And to dust will return, our flesh and bone,
For all that liveth, dust claims his own.

Dust, which to our soles did cleave and cling,
Is blooming to-day in the flowers of spirng;
And to-morrow the bees, so busy, discreet,
Will draw from the calyx the honey so sweet.
And you, dear readers, consume their prey,
The honey from flowers, the product of clay.

This circuit continues in ceaseless haste,
For nature works steady, and knows no waste.
Your body of to-day, long ere you're dead,
Has exchanged every atom — the tears you shed
Will rise to the sky, and fall as rain,
And thus reproduce your equal again.

As worthless as dust, says the ignorant man:
But the research of the wise, to whom nature's plan
Has been revealed, can see that dust
Is a mighty factor, before whom all must
In reverence bow, for dust is king,
The brains and sinew of everything.

REVENGE

"Revenge," he cried, and passion-swayed, he yearned
  Each wrong sustained, by greater wrong to square;
Yet soon he found the only thing he earned
  Was not content, but strife his growing share.
And he perceived that on each battle-ground,
New enemies upon his doings frowned.

At last he said, " 'Tis vain with common arms,
  Antagonists as well equipped as I
Thus to attack. Not hate, but love's sweet charms
  Henceforth all my opponents shall defy.
To weapons, such as heretofore employed,
I'll trust no more, and be no more annoyed.

"I'll strike clear home, with weapons which increase
  In strength and force, if used against our foes;
I'll aim, henceforth, my better self to please,
  And to subdue my passions in their throes.
Revenge I'll have, and sated my desire,
I'll every night in peace and calm retire."

And thus he gained his end, and humbled those
  Who never yield when yielding means defeat;
And thus he proved alike to friend and foes,
  That love sent forth, with love doth ever meet;
And when revenge the theme is of the hour,
He tells his tale, a tale of love's great power.

THE BREATH OF GOD

God made Adam of clay, and blew His breath into him, giving him a soul.— Genesis.

God's breath goes forth, a thousand babes are born,
And countless beasts and plants to life are brought;
God's breath inhaled, of life again are shorn
Those creatures who, like one-day flies, are wrought
To fill a moment's space within time's sea,
And then return, yet never cease to be.

God's changing breath, which life or death unties,
As seen by men, all things doth regulate;
With endless change, the changeless one supplies
And aims the offspring of his breath to sate.
He gives His own to His, and all retains;
His one hand's loss, the other fills with gains.

In future times, towards other worlds exhaled,
I'd fain go forth, progressing on my way;
And since on earth, in many things I've failed,
I still may hope, my frailties' course to stay,
And to receive, equipped by greater means,
Truth's greater gifts, now hid by weakness' screens.

THE BROWN MAN'S BURDEN

With apologies to Rudyard Kipling.

(Written during the Russo-Japanese War, 1904.)

Take up the Brown Man's burden,
  Since ye to lift have stooped,
And teach the pale intruder
  On whom your hosts have swooped,
That white or dark or yellow
  Is equal in God's sight,
And that ye have the justice
  And valor in this fight.

Take up the Brown Man's burden
  Without undue delay,
And send the hords of robbers
  Upon their homeward way.
Show Russia and England
  And Germany and France
And other tribes as selfish
  Your sternest countenance.

Take up the Brown Man's burden,
  Which means the white man's gun,
And shoot, when reason faileth,
  Until your foe doth run —
A lesson in mild manners,
  As cowardice appears,
Therefore, strike hard and harder,
  Draw blood, and even tears.

Take up the Brown Man's burden,
  Your manful days draw nigh;
Your years of patient labor,
  Approved are they, on high.
Yet childish are your doings,
  Seen by exploiter's eyes,
Therefore, assert your manhood,
  And with your burden rise.

Take up the Brown Man's burden,
  Shirk not the urgent task,
And ye, whom God's peace favored,
  Shalt now in honor bask.
'Tis honor, wealth, and station,
  Which here on earth prevails;
Not peace, nor virtue's striving,
  If weighed on earthly scales.

Take up the Brown Man's burden,
  Forget your peaceful aims,
Until brute force has conquered,
  Alas, in brutish games.
The wise to throw, takes wisdom,
  And force to force doth yield,
And mirrors are to blindness
  An unproductive field.

Take up the Brown Man's burden,
Repulse the white man's greed,
And when he's down and humbled,
  In ways less stern proceed.
Your words, when ye have punished
  The selfish and profane,
Will weigh like words inspired,
  And peace again will reign.

SPRING

Of butterflies, of blooming flowers,
  Of clouds and sunshine should I sing;
Of birds, of bees, of April showers —
  In fact, of each awaking thing,
  For it is spring.

Yet speechless stand I, and admire
  The matchless forms of nature's mold,
Which, could I say all I desire,
  Would fill a book, yet leave half told,
  What I behold.

My ear, if true to nature's plans,
  May aid the search which I pursue;
My eye the surface also scans,
  But fails to grasp the meaning true
  Of all I view.

By what I see, I the unseen
  To judge — alas, in vain — essay,
For all the knowledge which I glean
  Of Him, the author of each day,
  Doth me betray.

Each of his creatures may perceive
  Another side of everything;
Yet all do err, if they believe
  They see the whole, as it doth spring
  From nature's king.

He who sees all, doth all create
With change, the tool at his command;
And we, who our senses sate,
Perceive, but seldom understand,
The things at hand.

'Tis best that we all times rejoice,
For finding much which us may cheer;
In ringing tones, in silent voice,
Serene to thee, to me austere,
God speaketh here.

MY HOBBY

Manifold are the devices
Which fate in its whim doth employ
To lure to content the yearning heart, bent
To play with a hobby or toy.
O youth, not forgotten, though vanished
Are thy pleasures, to memory banished.

The toys of my childhood discarded,
Which cheered me when all else did fail;
I still firmly cling to another plaything,
'Tis my hobby, so feeble and frail.
I'd gallop, aye, gallop forever,
Were the poor little thing but more clever.

I feed it with morsels of wisdom,
Alas, but a second hand food,
Which father to son, in this world's changing run,
Bequeathes, oft but half understood.
I pet it and nurse it with care,
Yet often my share is despair.

The longer I search for perfection
With resolute, quickening stride,
The farther, it seems, are its joy-giving beams
Removed from my fruit-wanting side.
All knowledge, book-learning inclusive,
Oft seems, like a mirage, delusive.

Ah, wert thou, dear hobby, Pegasus,
No longer I'd mourn and repine.
In rapture I'd steep, and in glee overleap
The verge of my narrow confine.
Return, O conceit of my childhood,
To me, in life's woe-sprinkled wildwood.

CHANGE, NOT REST

When death, who ne'er slackens his far-reaching stride,
Reduces a victim and ends his career;
When man, the frail bantling, the thrall of his pride,
Has ended his doings on this earthly sphere:
We say and repeat it, and ever attest,
"Peace to his ashes, he now is at rest."

But rest, even God in His workings doth shun,
Although the Eternal need time not to spare;
And change is the thread which through all things doth run,
On earth, in the heavens, and everywhere.
Rest and relapse are of kindred import,
And both are death's handmaids, two of a cohort.

The matter, still active, but hastens its change,
When freed from the trammels which life doth control;

And each of the atoms itself doth arrange
  In changèd relations to the all and the whole.
And rest vainly enters with change to contest,
For change is God's servant, the foremost and best.

In change, when all else us doth leave in despair,
  We find recreation and solace to soothe;
And when we return to the every-day lair,
  We find we have cheated time's e'er gnawing tooth;
Yet must we admit that the comfort thus found,
The soul healeth first, next the matter around.

And why should the soul, after death, not partake
  Of the hope, which in change, ever springs up anew?
And why should the spirit, like matter, not slake
  Its longing for change, and the future to view?
Are the atoms unconscious, do we judge aright?
Yet surely our spirit outwings the dark night.

I pray not for rest, but for change, and a chance
  To view in the future, God's wonders in turn;
I pray for the insight which e'er doth enhance
  The value of all in this earthly sojourn.
I pray for repose, which the child is of change;
But rest everlasting seems a punishment strange.

THE NIGHT

When the birds retire
To their roost in the spire,
  And the purple hue of the day declines,
And the light
  Of the moon, the hills entwines;
We call it night.

When the bats and the owls
Begin their prowls;
  When the spirits of darkness their wings unfold,
Far and near,
  And the voices of the dusk our ears behold,
Husky and drear;

When a spectral shade
Will come and fade
  And reappear, us to dismay
And terrify;
  When Luna hides, our fancy's play
Will multiply.

When Morpheus Rex
Our dreams perplex,
  And our spirit leads us far away,
And on its flight
  Meets hosts of phantoms in array,
We call it night.

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT A FAILURE

A pig which in blindness is groping,
  May heedless, ill-guided proceed,
Despoiling a thing of great value,
  Assigned it to succor in need.

And yet, who would punish the creature,
  Whose failing excuses the wrong,
Whose fault is a logical sequel
  Which to the infirm doth belong?

And man, by his wishes misguided,
  Is blinder in all his pursuits
Than even the pig so ill-fated;
  Despising the least transient fruits.

To punish him for his shortcomings,
  Would wisdom not bring to him home;
And justice in such a proceeding,
  Would hide like a pebble in foam.

"But," says one, "cupidity's servants
  On others their wrongs will inflict,
Will gorge their own purses with mammon,
  And all that is just contradict."

And blinder than both the foregoing,
  More hoggish than either, is he
Whom love has completely abandoned,
  Who ever unsated must be.

Unsated — oh terror of terrors —
  While wealth, which should quench his desire
Surrounds him, he, famished and yearning,
  Embraces an undying fire.

To punish him justly and fairly,
  He should be allowed to proceed
Until he, by sweeping disrelish,
  Is forced wiser counsels to heed.

MIND'S SOLITUDE

From the hour of birth, when the spark was kindled,
  In this, our frail and transient shell,
Until our life has ebbed and dwindled,
  Will solitude within us dwell.
Our consciousness and thinking mind
Holds slow communion with its kind.

Thy smiling face, thy careless mien,
  May disguise a groan within you,
And heartache may, although not seen,
  Strain your every nerve and sinew;
And even those who near thee dwell
Can't estimate your talents well.

Mind's solitude reigns everywhere,
  All o'er the world, where man is living,
In public halls or hermit's lair,
  To solitude, his dole he's giving.
By outward mold, we know our kin,
But strangers to us, are the spirits within.

Though intimate with our friends,
  And near them through each passing hour,
The hidden thought its realm defends
  Against each strange, intruding power,
And gulfs remain, which ever hide
A wealth of thought, like oceans wide.

For years we may together dwell,
  And know each others traits and troubles;
We may distrust and scruples quell,
  And shun deception's short-lived bubbles.
Yet, after all, we stand alone,
In times of stress, to sigh and moan.

And when we think we have disclosed
  And fathomed every nook and cranny
Within a mind which seems composed
  Of light alone — one out of many —
We find the task with which we cope
Proves that we still in darkness grope.

MUSINGS OF A DREAMER

What am I? Whence from, ah, and whither?
Did chance or a whim place me hither?
  Is life, which unconscious remains,
Though weaving and spinning, the link of beginning,
  Or the end of eternity's chains?

To fathom life's secrets, confronting
The living, I tried, yet am wanting
  In all that resembles result;
And death to define, the task I assign
  To those who can read the occult.

I've learned in long years, steeped in sorrow,
Oft cheered with vain hopes for to-morrow,
That life is akin to a trance.
I've found to my terror that all may prove error
Which human conceit may advance.

Proud structures of wisdom fell humbled,
And all that existed, e'er crumbled,
Beneath time's ne'er slackening heel;
And the more I am yearning for the gift of discerning,
The more I my ignorance feel.

An atom, ne'er missed, yet essential,
To make up creation substantial,
Am I, in my limited sphere.
Yet not without reason, but the fruit of his season,
Is man in his puny state here.

The past to our judgement is shrouded,
And to-day in its glare finds us crowded
With theories, doctrines obscure;
And the future encroaching on the present, is broaching
New puzzles, weak men to allure.

Alas, even knowledge concerning
Ourselves, is in spite of all learning,
At best but a fruitless essay;
We try to unravel the paths the stars travel,
While we from self-knowledge do stray.

All is vain that we value and cherish,
Doomed in its season to perish,
Created the living to test,
Who, loving or hating, in zeal ne'er abating,
In stores for the future invest.

Love, in its blessed course, is e'er finding
A certain reward, but hates grinding.
All structures doth build on loose sand,
The former, the kernel of wisdom eternal,
The latter, a craft sure to strand.

Vain are all ambitions, provided
They approach not the light which e'er guided
Those seeking in earnest the truth,
For which we are groping, despairing and hoping,
Which only escapes from death's tooth.

Truth is the true searcher's requital,
And love is the virtue most vital,
God's messengers laden with cheer,
Who come in dark hours, in sunshine and showers,
Where they are, God also is near.

MEMORY

Oh dream of my childhood, oh pleasure unfading,
Like fairies caressing, approaches thy spell,
And fain doth my spirit, new trials evading,
Upon ever-changing remembrances dwell.
The joys of past seasons, which never corrode,
Should brighten each sorrow and lighten each load.

The log house, though humble, gave shelter unstinted,
When blizzards did threaten its site to engulf,
And the creak of the storm-shaken clapboards e'er hinted
That the element's fury surpasses the wolf,
When hunger his stomach doth shrivel and shrink,
And he, disappointed, to his cavern doth slink.

The springs of the valley, whose babble since languished,
I've seen in their vigor, and heard in their prime;
Alas, 'tis a thought which often me anguished,
That naught can escape from the ravage of time,
Which ever unsated, doth all things devour —
Even itself in the swift-passing hour.

The grapes of the forest, the nuts which we gathered,
The blackberry bushes, o'erburdened with fruit,
The tribe of blythe songsters, in gay colors feathered,
The squirrel, rehearsing his standing salute —
All these, and the stately, yet whispering trees,
I see oft before me — true memory's fees.

The orchids and blossoms by lovers demanded,
Vieing each other in grace to outdo;
The fish, which the angler of patience e'er landed,
From waters portraying the heaven's clear blue;
The reptile, oft harmless, yet shunned all the same,
I should as a passing reflection here name.

The plain daily diet, from nature's own salver,
As pure and as wholesome as the dew of the night,
Of which e'en a king or a gay truffle delver
Might envy the feaster, was a source of delight.
And the woes which in childhood us often befall
Could now neither frighten myself, nor appall.

Oh dreams of my childhood! Oh pleasure unfading!
How soothing and cheering your gentle arts are!
Not honor, nor even misfortunes degrading
Can smother your ceaseless and bright-shining star.
Your visits are blessings, which often, I pray,
May comfort my sorrows, my ailings allay.

THE TALE OF THE SCISSORS GRINDER

Dismal and dreary o'er the beautiful isle,
Hung clouds of dark vapor, which tried to beguile
The hosts in their clamor, who yearned to unwind
The threads of the fates, whose tireless hand,
E'er spinning and weaving, life's cream doth demand.
"Scissors to grind, ho, scissors to grind,
I pray you, good people, more scissors to grind."

The deafening bustle, the uproar and din,
Preceding the struggle, which was to begin
For Cuba, fair Cuba, e'er treated unkind,
Rose upward, e'er swelling in awful accord,
And the army passed onward with musket and sword.
"Scissors to grind, ho, scissors to grind,
I pray you, good people, more scissors to grind."

Capron, the captain, so brave and so bold,
Stood firmly, unflinching, resolved to uphold
The banner of freedom, which ever we find
Where truth and where light in their conquering train
An abode for the peaceful and humble doth gain.
"Scissors to grind, ho, scissors to grind,
I pray you, good people, more scissors to grind."

The cannons were roaring like demons of hell,
Huge missiles e'er bursting in torrents now fell,
A deluge of fire before and behind,
Yet onward and onward the brave captain pressed,
Though the enemy struggled like giants possessed.
"Scissors to grind, ho, scissors to grind,
I pray you, good people, more scissors to grind."

"Ho there!" cried a messenger from his swift steed,
Which, dripping, exhausted, could scarcely proceed:
"Dear Captain forgive me, for doubtless your mind,
My tidings will burden with sadness and grief;
Your son has gone down like a storm-shattered leaf."
"Scissors to grind, ho, scissors to grind,
I pray you, good people, more scissors to grind."

The captain ne'er faltered nor slackened his gait,
Until the fierce combat began to abate,
And the forces opposing were fleeing like blind.
Then, hastening backward in search of his boy
Whom the fates had forsaken, now broke like a toy.
"Scissors to grind, ho, scissors to grind,
I pray you, good people, more scissors to grind."

Prostrated, the last of his promising sons
He saw now before him. Oh proud Spanish Dons,
Your thrust has gone deeper than even designed.
He stooped to uncover the face ever dear,
Of him who thus checked in his onward career.
"Scissors to grind, ho, scissors to grind,
I pray you, good people, more scissors to grind."

He smoothed his locks, and a smile sweet and sad
His countenance stern, in its bright halo clad
"Well done, my dear boy!" — And rising, confined
His anguish and sorrow where mortal conceit,
Deficient and helpless, is apt to retreat.
"Scissors to grind, ho, scissors to grind,
I pray you, good people, more scissors to grind."

Capron, the captain, as brave as before,
His duties fulfilled, and his trials forebore.

But when the war over, his vitals declined,
And like a grand oak tree, of all limbs deprived,
His body succumbed — but his spirit survived.
"Scissors to grind, ho, scissors to grind,
I pray you, good people, more scissors to grind."

A PROPHECY

(This poem was written during the Boer War, and was aimed against the English government, not the English people, whom I always admired.)

Ye bards of old! Ye prophets skilled and wise!
Ye sages who, inspired, oft did rise
  The will of God to mankind to proclaim;
Ye seers gifted, who the fate foretold
Of nations doomed to fall or to enfold
  Their strength and virtue in His holy name,

To you I bow; forgive that I intrude
Inspired thoughts to voice — in solitude
  They came unbidden, and with me abide.
Forgive that I, not prompted by conceit,
But by a sense of duty, yielding, meet
  An obligation urgent like the tide.

I see the cloud, scarce visible and small,
Before whose wrath a mighty realm shall fall,
  Whose prime is past, whose deeds of guilt and wrong
Have undermined its fundamental stay:
I see it grow, I see in fierce array
  Nemesis and her sterner sisters throng.

Britannia! Thy doom is near, ah near!
Although thou rulest yet a hemsiphere.
  Thy days are counted, and thy last respite,
Has been recorded in the book of death.
Exhausted is God's patience, and his breath
  Or hand will crush your idols and your might.

Your maxims, that the fittest should survive
Will be fulfilled. Yet fitness to deprive
  Thy weaker fellow-men of all they own
Was here not meant, but fitness to subdue
Your greed for more, which ruthless, ever slew
  Those who opposed your force in ev'ry zone.

Those are the fittest who, in times of need
Unflinching stand, and ne'er an inch recede,
  And drain their blood, if such a sacrifice
Fate doth demand. And even when hard pressed,
Ne'er do forget that righteousness is blesssed,
  While unjust force the laws of God defies.

Those are the fittest, who such means employ
Which giveth life, and not each day destroy
  The works of God, embodied in each man.
Those who respect the right which snail or fly
Can justly claim, the right to live, or die,
  As was outmapped in nature's guiding plan.

Thy government, for which thy children bleed,
Britannia, gives them but scanty meed;
  Those who thy battles fight receive but bones,
While favored few the flesh and cream demand,
Which rightfully should fill your people's hand
  And not increase the wealth of selfish drones.

Thy love for gold, for wealth, for idle dross
Injustice breeds, and widow's tears across
  The ocean's deep, and tears at home in streams,
Cry for revenge, robbed of their only stay
By deeds of those who must a court obey,
  Composed of men whose every thought blasphemes.

Thy end is near, Britannia! Thy pride,
Thy fleet, will vanish, yea, like vapors, glide
  Into oblivion, displaced by nature's powers,
Which skilful hands and guided minds will find
Thy ships to break, and fortresses to grind
  Into the dust, which all vain things devours.

Iniquity, and ruthless selfish aims
Marked e'er thy course, but fitter beings' claims
  Will soon prevail, and peace and freedom thrive;
Where now thy arsenals the eye offend,
The plow and spade in diligence will mend
  The injury, now threatening all alive.

Thy brazen guns, intended to destroy,
And sinful rulers who foul means employ,
  Their ends to gain, shall be in time reduced,
And higher aims than slaughter, strife, and war
Shall rule the world, shall force the gate ajar
  Which now bars out fair justice, oft abused.

Of wealth deprived, of all thy powers shorn,
Misrule will end, and virtue's wreath adorn
  Thy conquerors, who from the ranks shall rise,
Which e'er produced the best, which e'er brought forth
Men, noted for their fitness and their worth —
  The ranks of toil, where strength dwells in disguise.

One consolation shall thy people cheer,
O'er whom vile lordlings e'er did domineer,
  Consuming that which others did create:
They shall observe, while time through epochs glides,
Their language grow, and spread with giant's strides,
  While other tongues cease to reverberate.

The time will come, when obsolete thy name,
Known to but few, unknown to lasting fame,
  Yet shall the best thou ever didst esteem —
Thy language — conquer in its peaceful course,
The speech of those who broke your brutal force
  And thus enhance the star of fitness' gleam.

Britannia, beware! Ah, heed the signs,
Which like the shades, when noonday's sun declines,
  Begin to grow, which in each rune reveals
Thy coming doom — Britannia, atone!
Retrace thy steps, for penitence alone
  Can check the fate which dead'ning o'er thee steals.

THE DUTIES OF THE GIFTED

An idiot's error counts lightly,
For fetters his groping mind bind,
And God, in his wisdom, ne'er asketh,
From him who is mentally blind
An insight, unerring, unfailing,
In efforts, alas, unavaling.

But ye, who are capable, gifted,
Whose conscience can plainly discern;

Whose spirit in higher realms soaring
Could, toilless, life's simple truths learn;
For ye, it is meet and befitting
To avoid aimless folly and flitting.

Your gifts are the bearers of duties,
Your wisdom a borrowed attire,
Reflecting but qualified honor,
As madmen ne'er hatred inspire;
Your gifts are a trust, no possession,
Misused, they may sink to a passion.

Your strength is the strength of thy Maker,
Beware, how thou wait'st on his trust;
Count, mortal, thy life a vain struggle,
Unless all your doings are just.
The thought of thy helpless weak brother,
All selfish impulses should smother.

Your aptness, without much exertion,
Triumphantly conquers defeat:
While he, the less gifted, reaps failure,
With which all his life is replete.
His misconceived efforts fail ever,—
Yet credit deserves true endeavor.

He does all his Maker expected,
'Though meager results are his share;
And thou, who art favored and skilful,
See to it, your deeds do compare
With all thy endowments of spirit,
Or thou wilt but shadows inherit.

TIME

O time, stay thy footsteps, suspend thy mad haste,
Oh, cease in thy march, for thy hurry lays waste.
The dreams of my youth, and the hopes which, forsooth,
Still beckon to me in my search for the truth.

Man's yearning for deeds and for thoughts which outlive
The short space allotted to each fugitive,
Who follows thy path, O time, ever hath
To struggle 'gainst thee, to the end of his breath.

The best part of life, ay, months and long years,
Finds us but in thralldom, 'twixt hoping and fears,
For necessity's spurn, at every turn,
Defeats noble aims, which in human hearts burn.

Oft talents are smothered, and spirits subdued
Which, free from want's shackles, would failure exclude,
While others succeed to overcome need,
Yet die ere the harvest could spring from the seed.

Alas, 'tis your nature, O time, in your speed
To tarry no moment, not even to heed
The calls of distress, nor the joyful caress
Of those who would hold what is doomed by life's stress.

The past is thy footprint, and thou art to-day
The future, the highway approaching your sway,
And we who are grieving, oft doubting, believing,
Are eddies of dust which your footsteps are cleaving.

Yet thou, even thou, who resistless proceeds
Art naught but the servant of Him who e'er leads;
And though never seen, no virtue so mean
Which he would reject in His wisdom serene.

YOUR FACE WILL TELL THE STORY

An abstract on its pages
  Doth past transactions show;
And vanished thoughts, forgotten,
  Which in thy past did glow,
And pain or joy which keenly
  Did torture or enthrall;
Your face will tell the story,
  Your countenance tells all.

Each living thought which dwelleth
  Within thy active mind
A trace leaves on thy visage,
  A mark, it leaves behind,
And shows the close observer
  Your rising or your fall;
Your face will tell the story,
  Your countenance tells all.

Your noble thoughts unspoken
  Did shape their dwelling place
To make it uninviting
  For vice, devoid of grace.
But if the latter enters
  And thou dost it install,
Your face will tell the story,
  Your countenance tells all.

Degraded thoughts which action
Bring forth, or dormant lie,
Their imprint leave upon thee,
Their signs will multiply.
And sorrow's sting and gnawing
Will on thee cast its pall;
Your face will tell the story,
Your countenance tells all.

The miser hoarding chattels,
The usurer, whose heart
To stone has turned, ne'er sated,
No pleasing sight impart,
Since such emotions brand us
In runes, which do appall;
Your face will tell the story,
Your countenance tells all.

Your voice, it may deceive us,
Your written pages, too,
May leave a false impression
And us with faith imbue.
But if you stand before me
In virtue, large or small,
Your face will tell the story,
Your countenance tells all.

TRANSLATIONS

POESY AND WOMEN

(By Julius Rodenberg.)

The pure and true of womankind,
  Like roses are, in darkened leaves,
Their dreaming soul, vague, undefined,
  A fragrance round each object weaves.

In her own world, where virtue dwells,
  All is serene, and graceful, tender;
A glance into her pure soul tells
  A tale of heaven's own surrender.

True, thou shouldst listen to the wise,
  Nor be a child which only prattles,
And from thy teacher's desk shouldst rise,
  Equipped with means to fight life's battles.

But deathless things, unseen, divined,
  If thou dost follow in thy labors,
Then turn thy face to womankind
  And poesy, for they are neighbors.

THE POET'S PREROGATIVES

(By Hans Freiherr von Rothkirch.)

Thou dost lament, O poet, that each dream
Has fled, to leave thee poorer in life's stream.
But why repine, while millions of others
The burden feel, which now thy spirit smothers?

Each day and year, we see some blossoms fall,
And nearer draws the grave to one and all;
Yet few of them are conscious and aware
How sadly they are changed through grief and care.

The poet only sees — oft with dismay —
What he has been, and what he is today.
He, and none else, in written runes confessed
What he has lost, and what he ne'er possessed.

Each song he penned in former times reveals
How hopes were blasted, and again he feels
The woe and pain which others have forgot,
Arising from mind's cemetery lot.

Yet must I add, his burden is but just;
For strength he has to rise, while in the dust
His brothers sink, in heart and spirit broken;
Ill luck he shapes to be his prop and token.

Therefore, be proud, O poet! Ne'er complain
That joys have fled, while miseries remain;
Prerogatives to bear with stronger heart
His greater burdens, are the poet's part.

I CRAVE OF THEE

(By H. von Fallersleben.)

I crave of thee what time ne'er overcame,
'Tis beauty which springs from the heart;
I ask of thee what ne'er this world can claim,
Thy pure child love, devoid of art.

This is the heart's most rare and precious boon,
Which doth our life with joy adorn;
Owns thee the world, and thou to me art soon
As one who died, or ne'er was born.

HOMAGE TO THE ARTS

(By Schiller.)

Unrestrained by bounds, unfettered, free,
I hasten on through space, by naught confined.
My realm immense is thought. The word's the key,
The wingèd tool, with which I all unbind,
And all that heaven or earth from others hides,
Or nature in her secret way begets,
Must yield to me and be unveiled. Besides,
The poet's art no foe of light abets,
But greater beauty nowhere else I found
Than a fair soul, with beauty all around.

PERSEVERANCE

(By Julius Hammer.)

If thou wouldst build a lasting temple,
  Where beauty dwells, and worth abides,
Let thou not fear of earnest labor,
  Thy courage check, or halt thy strides.
Enthusiasm and hope's promise,
  Are not enough to gain thy end;
Exhaustive strife with yielding matter,
  Alone, can faultless form and blend.

THE COMMON GROUND

(By Frederic Rueckert.)

If thou wouldst thy brother's feeling
  Deeply stir, my word accept;
Sing of woe, whose strains appealing
  Pass no heart which ever wept.

There are those to whom a stranger
  Joy, undarkened and serene,
Ever was. But woe and danger,
  All, alas, have felt and seen.

THE PARTITIONING OF THE EARTH

(By Schiller.)

"Take ye the world," cried Jove from his high throne,
To men, his thralls, "to keep and to possess;
Take this, my gift, which ye shalt ever own;
But portion it, that all this boon may bless."

Then hurried each, and scrambled in much haste,
And young and old were tireless all day;
The farmer took the fields, yet bare and waste,
The hunter chose the forest, there to stay.

The merchant gathered all that he could store;
The abbot hastened to the sweetest wine;
The king claimed toll on street and river's shore,
And said, "One tenth of all that grows is mine."

At last, when all was claimed and fixed upon,
The poet came, from whence, no mortal knew,
And asked his share, but all, alas was gone,
And vain the search, which he did thence pursue.

"Woe, woe!" cried he, "that I alone should fail,
Thy truest son, who aims but thee to please:
I, who ne'er folly's stings, nor truth's travail,
Did shun, to gain the sluggard's toilless ease."

"If thou didst tarry in the land of dreams,
Blame thou not me, if all earth's wealth has flown,
Where hast thou been?" quoth Jove, "to me it seems
Thou reapest that which thou alone hast sown."

"Mine eye upon thy countenance did dwell,
And on thy heaven's harmonies, mine ear;
Forgive the spirit whom thy light's sweet spell
From earthly things removed to thine own sphere."

"Alas!" said Jove, "disposed of is each prize,
And naught is left which I could still bestow,
If thou wilt live with me in Paradise,
Thou shalt at will, in freedom come and go."

DRAMAS

AMONG THE PIONEERS

A Drama in Four Acts

Dramatic Personel

Mr. Brimbury, *a rancher.*
Thomas, *his son*
Adelheid, *his daughter.*
Mr. Abner, *a rancher.*
Louis, *his son.*
Cabano, *chief of a band of outlaws.*
Lieut. Yale, *of the U. S. Army.*
Robbers and soldiers.

ACT I

(Brimbury's *log house. Enter* Brimbury *and* Thomas.)

Thomas

Just so, forsooth!
What thou hast said is but the truth.
The net of circumstances drags
Us surely down, if courage lags,
Mesh by mesh, in silent stealth
Destiny weaves on. I felt
E'er you did speak, what doth oppress
Thy mind, my father dear.

BRIMBURY

No doubt, my boy.
We both see clear, but how proceed?
An easy task 'tis e'er to feed
Those with advice who need it not;
But now that we, by fate's complot
Pursued, safe remedy is wanting.

THOMAS

What can we do, what shall we do?
This is the thread I did pursue
All day, all night, with searching mind,
And found, or rather, tried to find
Expedients, which by the score
Passed by my waking inward core,
Yet all seems vain, a prey of doubt.

BRIMBURY

The banyan tree, which in its age
Its offspring's succor doth engage
To help to bear the weight of years,
As I thy aid now seek in fears,
Is much like me, whose strength declines,
While still his mind to broaden pines.

THOMAS

Oh speak not thus. Thy strength remains;
Thy grief for mother only chains
Thy spirit down in saddened gloom.

BRIMBURY

Alas, she's gone! All mortals' doom!
And oft I ask, why should I mourn?
Are not to die all beings born?

But since her deeds behind her left
The proof of worth, the more bereft,
The more forsaken do I feel.

THOMAS

Pray rouse thyself. We share thy grief;
Let us consult, for time is brief;
As I remarked, luck seems to stride
Away from us, like waning tide.
Lost is the man of sluggard's gait,
For timely deeds may conquer fate.

BRIMBURY

Well said, my boy, speak on, I pray.

THOMAS

The hostile rogues with copper skin,
Or else the bandit, whose chagrin
Poor Adelheid did cause,
Stole our herds with thievish claws.
And I for one, I should advise
To follow swift, and to chastise
The thieves, whoe'er they be.

BRIMBURY

The bandits all are more to fear
Than Indians. To me 'tis clear,
The oft mistreated redskin's brain
The cunning lacks, his ends to gain,
By slow degrees, beneath a mask,
While they yet in our friendship bask.

THOMAS

Dost to Cabano thou allude?

BRIMBURY

The same. The rogue who did intrude
Upon thy lovely sister.

THOMAS

Ah, her footsteps I discern.

(*Enter* ADELHEID.)

BRIMBURY

My child, to see thee I did yearn.
Pray do relate, how, when, and where,
Thou first didst meet the evil stare
Of him, whose boldness thee offends,
Who doth by stealth gain all his ends.

ADELHEID

Beyond the hill. Thou knowest the place,
Where stately woods the hillside grace,
A favored spot, a place to muse,
Where light and shade, e'er changing, fuse;
Where oft my mind in aimless dreams
Forgets the world, which glows and gleams.
'Twas there, a week ago, one day
I sat, when lo, to my dismay
Two gaudy rogues, like birds of prey,
With tomahawk, did bounce to slay,
Or else e'en worse, they meant to drag
As captive me, onto a nag.

THOMAS

Oh, sneaking knaves, had I been there,
I'd made them skip, by Jove I swear!

ADELHEID

I wish you had, in place of him
Whose piercing eyes and features grim,
My terror did at once increase.

BRIMBURY (*impatient*)

Relate, my child, relate!

ADELHEID

As I remarked, both rushed towards me,
While terrified, I tried to flee.
One grasped my arm; when, tempest like,
Cabano dashed towards us, to strike
On fleetest steed. With piercing yell
Both fled as if from doom's own knell.

THOMAS

From bad to worse, from death to hell!
Oh, that such mischief thee befell!

ADELHEID

"I swear," said he, "by these, my scars,
That their escape my pleasure mars,
Yet did I hesitate to aim,
For fear to hit thee, noble dame.
Philosophers like me, appeal
To reason first, then to their steel."
His speech was fair, but I did feel
His fiendish glance, which made me reel;
He led his steed, we homeward walked,
And oh, his tongue so glibly talked.

BRIMBURY

Was that the first time thou didst meet
That bandit, robber, rogue, and cheat,
Who now thy gratitude doth claim?

ADELHEID

The first. But oh, my words are lame,
Inadequate, to show how I
Abhor that man, whose deeds belie
That he unselfish acts this rôle.
He follows me with his cajole
At every turn.

THOMAS

Enough of this. To Abner's ranch (*Adelheid blushes*)
To seek the aid of Louis so stanch,
I'll ride in haste, and then we'll chase
The thieves so bold in heated race.
Not always justice wins the heat,
Yet he who yields invites defeat;
A swift resolve forestalls success,
While timid action doth caress
Disaster's greed.

BRIMBURY

Do as thou wilt. Thou speakest well;
My aching bones and health compel
Me to abstain from joining thee,
And then, I fear, 'twould surely be
Not well to leave poor Adelheid
Alone, while these marauders glide
Unseen through bush and hidden caves.

THOMAS

Indeed, the fiercest of the knaves,
Cabano, 'tis whose stealth I fear;
That he may fail, I wish sincere.

(*Exit* THOMAS.)

BRIMBURY

My heart with pleasure and with pride
Looks on thy brother, Adelheid;
Were I yet young, and thou not here,
Adventures such as I now fear
Would stimulate my love for deeds
Of valor, but my age impedes.

ADELHEID

No, father, no. Oh, speak not so.

BRIMBURY

I don't complain. I did outgrow
The pleasures which to youth belong;
Each state and age, of joys a throng
Can call its own. I now enjoy
My children's love without alloy.
Experience did ever teach
That naught on earth can last, that each
And every joy which came and grew
Is short-lived like the morning dew.
And wise is he who makes the best
Of every moment — God's bequest —
And though my frame in strength doth fail,
My mind more fitted to avail
Can grasp life's truth with greater ease
And hope grows bright at life's surcease.

ADELHEID

Forgive that I oft did bewail
The loss of things so vain and frail,
Which now I learn could never last,
Which are forgotten, gone, and passed.

BRIMBURY

Not so, my child. Though all will fade,
All small and passing things are made
To fill their place as we fill ours,
While God's great love above all towers.
The joys of life are manifold,
As are the plants which we behold;
Each in its place is necessary
To make the whole. The stem must carry
The finer parts which breathe the air,
And each receiveth its own share.
'Tis not in vain we pluck the flower,
Though fade it must, the selfsame hour.

ADELHEID

Thanks, father, thanks. Thy words so wise
Encourage me not to disguise
The sorrows which my mind oppress —
Perhaps thou knowest my distress.

BRIMBURY

Let me, my child thy burden share;
Reveal to me thy secret care.

ADELHEID

'Tis not alone the low pursuit
Of which we spoke, that pains acute;
'Tis not my mother's death alone
Which doth beget my secret moan.
Begin, I must, for none but thou
Can ease my mind, I do avow.

BRIMBURY

Cheer up, my child, and do not quail;
My care for thee shall never fail.

ADELHEID

Louis Abner, sir, whom all esteem,
Is dear to me, of him I dream
With open eyes, all night, all day,
If he is here or far away;
Though dark the day, if he is near,
All shadows seem to disappear.
He doth return my love, and I
In happiness would all outvie;
But, sir, his parents, aged and stern,
Object to me, in grief I learn.

BRIMBURY

Object to you?

ADELHEID

Indeed to me. It seems their view
Is far from broad, or why pursue
Me for my faith?

BRIMBURY

What, sayest thou, our differing creed?
Oh, that's the obstacle, indeed!
Were Louis like both his parents aged,
I'd toil to see thee disengaged.
But, happily, he is not thus,
His every thought is generous.
He's one of those whose deeds proclaim
That he, in spirit more than name,
Performs his tasks as God expects,
Regardless of all creeds and sects.
Subdue thy woe. All may yet end
Far better than we apprehend.

(*The curtain drops.*)

ACT II

(*In* ABNER'S *log house. Enter* ABNER *and* LOUIS.)

LOUIS

With due respect, I must reply
The facts I gave don't justify
Your attitude in this affair.

ABNER

Your insolence is hard to bear;
Your Adelheid, though smooth of face
Is one of a most godless race.

LOUIS

Why godless race? Are they not true?
Their blameless lives, I pray, review.
Although their faith is not like thine,
It's quite as worthy and divine.

ABNER

Hush, hush, thou vain, deluded fool!
Fit pupil of old Satan's school,
There is but one faith, only one,
Which leads to Him who guides the sun,
The faith I taught to thee, in vain,
A faith which angers the profane.

LOUIS

Their faith, like thine, doth surely please
God's wakeful eye, which all things sees.
The paths which lead to Him on high,
Are manifold, and signify

That those who ever seek and strive
In righteousness, they will derive
Their just reward, although their creed
May error be. God does not heed
The spoken word, but sees the deed,
And reads the thought which gave it birth.
We are weak children of this earth;
The chances are, we know far less
Of God and future, I confess,
Than does the fish, which sightless dwells
In solitude in deepest wells,
Knows of the creature man, so proud.

ABNER

Thou heretic. Thy words so loud,
Offend mine ears like sounds of hell.
Now sir! Art thou an infidel?

LOUIS

No infidel; no, father, no;
'Tis not my aim to overthrow
The teachings all, which do include
Much wisdom of great magnitude.
They are the best we can produce,
Yet far from godly in their use,
Unless to God we do submit
All differences, and acquit
In modesty, all tasks we meet.

ABNER

Thy tongue is sleek and indiscreet.

LOUIS

On God's infinity to dwell
Is past all earthly parallel.

We can the All not interview;
We only know He loves the true,
The kind, the just, who ne'er pursue
Their fellow-men. I have in view
The littleness of humankind
Whose self-aggrandizements remind
Me of the snail, whose narrow cell
Is his whole world, his citadel.
All see the world as it appears,
Not as it is. He who not hears
Can't comprehend the world of sound;
And he, the sightless, who is bound
To night eternal, he must gain
Conclusions slowly, grain by grain.
Had we another sense or two,
The Christian, the heathen, Jew,
Could see mistakes they now defend
But never wholly comprehend,
All-knowing God of all the cause.
Yet must I add, although some flaws
Are doubtless found in every creed,
'Tis easier, all must concede,
To criticize than to improve
The doctrines which our minds do move.

ABNER

Spare me. I scorn your wicked dish
Of madness and of gibberish.
If she, who did thy eloquence
Inspire, sir, to flights immense,
Will join our church, and will foreswear
Her own, which is old Satan's snare,
I will consent.

LOUIS

I pray thee, sir, not so, I pray.
Have patience, for thy words betray
That thou mistakest her to be
A shallow thing of low degree,
For only such their faith will change,
To please one person, and estrange
Themselves from those to whom they owe
Love, gratitude, from long ago.
And furthermore, those who revere
And truly love God, should adhere
Unswerving to their conscience' course,
For 'tis His voice, and He'll endorse
Their offering, although their mind
Can't grasp the truth to God confined.
To change our faith, as we would change
A coat, a dress, or rearrange
All passing things, destined to fade,
Strikes me as doth a masquerade,
Which oft beneath its glittering rind
Hides poverty of heart and mind.

ABNER

Enough of this. I've had my say;
I'm sorely grieved, that thou, my stay,
Shouldst thus repay the love and care
Which with thy mother I did share;
On whom to lean, I thought with pride,
When aged, my powers should subside.

LOUIS

I only ask, my father dear,
My Adelheid to see and hear;

My feeble words, despised and weak,
Thy ear to gain, in vain did seek.
To her good sense I now will trust
To move thy heart, and melt its crust.
Oho, who's there?

(*Enter* THOMAS *in haste.*)

THOMAS (*to* LOUIS)

In haste I've come to ask your aid,
Since I must seek the thieves who made
Away with our herds.

LOUIS

What sayest thou? What is it, friend?
Thieves, dost thou say? I apprehend
There will be work for us these days,
For lawlessness, barefaced, displays
A boldness, which all doth eclipse;
But off, in haste, not word of lips,
Nor fruitless loiter wins the day.

ABNER

Quite right you are. Off, off, I say.

(*Exit* THOMAS *and* LOUIS.)

Ah, ah, I'm stunned. Did I outlive
My time? Ah, sad prerogative
Of age to claim the title "Sage,"
While stripplings of this fellow's age
In words submissive and demure,
In wisdom veiled, try to allure
Us from the point of view which we
Upheld in sorrow, strife, or glee,

By habit strengthened, day and year,
Our staff and stay in times austere,
And now, that soon my task is o'er
Shall I admit that I deplore
My former course, that I was wrong?
No, thrice no, I'll plod along.

(*He strikes his hands in anger, and muses.*)

Yet true it is, when age doth throw
Its weight on us, we stubborn grow.
What we in youth by chance have missed,
In age we scorn, and we resist;
The pride of youth to time will yield,
But age its foibles ne'er repealed.
We all can see, that if the son
Does not eclipse his sire's run,
Progress will halt and retrograde,
And ignorance the world invade.

(*Again in anger.*)

But never, no, I'll ne'er consent.
My foolish boy must be content.

(*Again musing.*)

That fellow Tom, what fine a man —
I fain his sister's face would scan —
Not to forgive, but her to scorn.
I'll call on Brimbury this morn.
This foolish match in haste begun,
E'er I return, has had its run.
I'll ne'er consent.

(*Curtain falls.*)

ACT III

In BRIMBURY'S *log house.* BRIMBURY *and* ADELHEID. *Enter* ABNER.

ABNER

Good morning all. God be with you.

BRIMBURY

To you the same. What tidings new
Dost, neighbor dear, thou bring to-day?
But first be seated, sir I pray.

(ABNER, *sitting down, and looking at* ADELHEID *with mingled scorn and admiration.*)

I am devoid of eloquence,
Unskilled in speech, free of pretense,
I call on thee without much show;
My presence here is the outgrow
Of a short talk with Louis, my boy,
Who does, it seems, his time employ,
Or, more correct, his time to waste;
He courts your daughter, fair and chaste.

BRIMBURY

Pray, what of it if she is fair?
And chaste besides? They are a pair
Which e'er a higher price commands
Than gold and wealth, which ne'er expands,
And ne'er inspires shrunken hearts
To deeds of love, nor e'er imparts

The spirit which the avenues
Of helpfulness and love pursues,
Unless this wealth is made a tool
To help the good and kind to rule.

ABNER

Thou dost mistake me sir, not I
Object to charms and duties high,
Which in themselves are truly good,
But void of credit to my mood.
A gift of God, or duties done,
Deserve no praise, I offer none.

(*Aside.*)

Yet she's a witch, ah, Louis, poor fool,
Such charms as hers will overrule
The wisdom which old age begets,
E'en opposition youth abets.

BRIMBURY

What mutterest thou? art thou unwell?

ADELHEID

Sir, your distrust I pray dispel.

ABNER

What I've to say will soon be out.
I've come this foolish match to rout.
I've come to warn thee, maid, desist
Your arts to ply on Louis, and list:
Thy creed accursed between us stands
Like towering rock, like sinking sands.
This chasm deep, which naught can span,
Parts our kindred, race and clan.

BRIMBURY

Ah, sir, why dost thou thus adhere
To doctrines obsolete, austere?
I pity thee, thy heart will starve
While love its runes will elsewhere carve.
Thou seest thorns which ne'er will sting,
And in your blinded wrath wouldst fling
These thorns aside, but buds unseen
Fall victims to your zealous spleen.

ADELHEID (*to her father.*)

O father, please rebuke him not.
He loves his son. I pray allot
To him the right to plead his cause,
As he perceives and sees God's laws.
The object, less than failing eye,
Doth our searching mind belie.

(*To* ABNER.)

And, sir, permit me yet to add
Thy estimate, it makes me sad.
Why should not Louis and I agree,
While oak and elm and maple tree,
Each in his way, God's praise proclaim?
And onward, upward strive and aim?
If ever I did thee offend,
Your pardon, sir, I pray extend.

ABNER

All argument to naught will lead,
Unless thou wilt my claims concede.
Concerning Louis, my curse is thine,
I'll ne'er forgive in life's confine.

(*Enter* CABANO *with his band of robbers.*)

CABANO

Ha, ha, ha, ha! but I'll forgive.
Thy beauty is provocative.
I will enthrone thee in my cave
As reigning queen, and be thy slave:
For all are slaves; one bows to gold;
Another is by hate controlled;
One seeks for fame — poor blinded fool —
And prejudice doth others rule.
But slave of slaves is he who fails
To grasp the thraldom which regales
Its victims with a choicer draught
Than fame e'er won, or gormands quaffed.

BRIMBURY

Loud mouthed knave, I did suspect
This thievish plot, though indirect,
Must be thy work. But, sir, beware,
Though age my powers did impair,
I'm yet thy match.

(*Reaches for his rifle, but is overpowered.*)

ABNER

Vile scoundrel thou; thou didst employ
A coward's measure to decoy
Away the strong, whose shielding arm
Would keep the aged and weak from harm.

CABANO

Old scarecrow thou, please hold your tongue.
Philosophers like me ne'er swung
A deadly weapon without need
As long as cunning would succeed.

Humanity with business mixed,
My motto is. I have affixed
It to my coat of arms, which shows
A lion's claw, and fox's nose.

ABNER

One e'en more fitting, I'd suggest:
A rattlesnake and viper's nest.

ADELHEID

Ah, sir, I pray, do not provoke
His anger now. Your feelings cloak.

(*Kneeling to Cabano.*)

If in your breast there is a spark
Of knighthood left within the dark;
If memories, unsullied, pure,
Have left a trace where thoughts mature;
If thou a sister or a bride
E'er didst with love and manhood guide,
Then sir, I pray you, give us free.

CABANO

In this respect, we disagree,
Although the virtues thou didst name
Do all enhance my mortal fame.
I must refuse thy first request,
For what thou fear'st is for my best.
And what thou lov'st does not concern
Philosophers like me, who learn
To prize each gift within their reach
While critics tauntingly impeach
Such things as they ne'er could achieve,
And thus their envious souls relieve.

ABNER (*lifting up Adelheid*)

Forget, poor child, what I in haste
Have said to thee. And pray, don't waste
Upon this rascal here thy breath.

CABANO (*knocking Abner down*)

Insulting owl, O hell and death!
I'll teach thee, sir, thy words to weigh.
But no, ha ha, I'll not display
A weakness, sir, which would but show
That my philosophy did grow
Upon the bush which did bring forth
Your own conceit, of little worth.
And mind, old boy, I'll have my will,
And thou shalt see thy honest fill.

ADELHEID

Have mercy, sir!

CABANO

My darling dove, make haste, bestir
Thyself, without much more delay
Thy last adieu and farewell say
To this old hut, whose solid wall
Shall like a rotten turnip fall
Into the dust from whence did spring
Its strength, its weight, and everything.
Up, up, my men, weak tools of fate!
Another mesh we will create,
Another link, another span,
We'll add to doom's swift caravan.

(*All prisoners are bound and taken out, and the house is set on fire.*

(*Curtain drops.*)

ACT IV

(CABANO, ADELHEID, BRIMBURY, and ABNER *sit on robes in a cave. The robbers farther back sing the following song.*)

ROBBER'S SONG

We are the true princes who govern this earth;
We're free like the eagle, and rulers by birth.
In boldness we pillage the miserly host,
Whose aim is but riches, whose end is despair,
If free-hearted fellows like we ever share,
Without invitation, their opulent toast.

Unceasing we follow, by darkness obscured,
Or even in daylight, by cunning secured,
Our calling so noble, quite free of pretense.
And when we have gathered the surplus of man,
Whose means, oft ill gotten, are ample, we plan
A jollification in consequence.

'Tis true they will hang us if caught in a trap,
While thieves more pretentious are filling their lap
With honors and treasures, oft shielded by rank,
Yet do we not envy their hollow conceit,
For what we have stolen we drink and we eat,
While others dispose of their plunder less frank.

In winter and summer, in cold and in heat,
This cavern so spacious is our retreat.
Here do we endeavor most righteous to dwell.
They call us law-breakers, and doubtless we are,
But penance and prayer the devil will bar
From dragging triumphant us down into hell.

BRIMBURY

Nor need ye fear the Devil bold,
If true repentance doth enfold
Its gracious and its saving wings.
But ah, I fear the King of kings
Such feigning surely will condemn,
E'en more than theft. Such strategem
Can easily mislead the throng
Of thoughtless men. But Satan's prong
Inclined toward treachery and lies,
Strikes, swift and sure, him who defies
The Golden Rule, the highest law,
A rule devoid of every flaw,
Which even teaches us to treat
The speechless beast with love replete.

ABNER

What wilt thou, man? These fellows here,
Whose love for God is weak, whose fear
Is greater far of him with hoofs,
Try to subdue their soul's reproofs
By self-deceit, as doth the fowl,
Which in the desert loves to prowl,
Tries to escape by hiding swift
Its silly head beneath the drift.

BRIMBURY

And superstition roots and thrives
Where only ignorance survives.

CABANO

What, preaching here, you ninnies both?
'Tis true, these fellows here, I'm loth
To say, have not as yet imbibed
The virtues to the wise ascribed.

But why this fuss, why this ado?
Is not each grain which ever grew
Outweighed by chaff and worthless straw?
Philosophers like me, who saw
Enough of life in shine or shade,
Are satisfied the world was made
Not for the special use of man,
But man, it seems, in nature's plan,
Has been devised to share with all
That life can claim, or death can call
As victims in time's doubtful course,
The gifts that spring from nature's source.

(*He muses a while.*)

Were given I to thought profound,
I'd try to prove and to expound
That theories, though great and grand,
Are bubbles which we can expand
No farther than their true confines;
And that in all that lives there shines
A trace of reason, feeble though,
Seen in the acts of beings low,
While in the sturdiest human mind,
We folly meet, and failings find.
What proves this all? It proves to me
That naught on earth can perfect be.

BRIMBURY

It proves to me, perfection lies
In God alone, whose hand supplies
All kindred creatures of his stamp
With gifts to light up reason's lamp
To such degree as is his will.
It further proves, thou dost not fill

The expectations in thee placed,
By God and man. Thou hast disgraced
Thy gifts of mind, thy better part;
Foul are thy aims, and mean thy heart.

CABANO

Tut, tut, old fool. I am the fruit
Of circumstances. I dispute
The wisdom which unheard condemns —
But ha! Hello, unpolished gems,
Your noise subdue. What's up? Report!

(*Enter two robbers*)

1ST ROBBER (*laughing*)

Ah, captain, sir, didn't we have sport?

2D ROBBER

Hush, nonsense, sir. Mind not this block,
Who shook with fear, but like a cock,
Who saw the eagle change his course,
Crows out his triumph till he's hoarse.
The facts are these: A Union troop,
No doubt prepared on us to swoop
Three miles from here, near Medlin's Cup
We met this morn. We were dressed up
Like farmers, sir, with ax in hand,
This dolt, myself, and Johnny Rand.

CABANO

Eternal Styx! Black, sulphur brand,
Who'd thought of this? Speak, I command!

2D ROBBER

They asked for traces of thy camp;
We swore at thee, but this here scamp

Came near betraying all in haste;
His chicken-heart e'er bravely faced
The weak and aged, but when a foe
An equal match, his face doth show,
Then quails the blustering poltroon.

1ST ROBBER

Believe him not, the lying coon.

BRIMBURY (*sarcastic*)

Indeed, indeed, a worthy pair
This captain and disciple fair.
The one decoys the strong away,
Then gathers in an easy prey;
The other, too, much talk affords
But e'er his precious valor hoards.

CABANO

Another word, old coon, and thou
Shalt feel my wrath, I swear it now.

(*To* 2D ROBBER.)

Proceed, I say, out with your tale!

2D ROBBER

We led them onward to the trail
Which Louis and Tom and cattle thieves
Had lately passed. My fancy leaves
Me not in doubt, but that they now
Press onward, sir, and not allow
Space to increase 'twixt them and thee,
Whom they suspect the thief to be.

CABANO

Well done, my man. But let's suppose
The readiness with which they chose
The trail to take was but a feint?

2D ROBBER

True, true, my chief! I am acquaint
With tactics such as you've in view.
And Johnny Rand to watch, pursue,
I've left behind.

CABANO

Thou art a jewel, man. I fear
We must disband and disappear;
For when the lion prowls around,
The jackal's voice must not resound.
Philosophers like me concede
The privilege to rule and lead
To those whose strength of arm or mind,
Or better still, of both combined,
Can force all opposition down.
In other words, the wise do frown
On rash exploits which mostly end
In such results which none can mend.

ABNER

Well spoken, sir, I do admire
Thy modesty, not to aspire
To fall in open fight and gain
A brave man's grave, and not disdain.
A fitting motto in thy case
Would doubtless be: "Life and disgrace
Is better far than saint's renown."

CABANO

Ah, knave, foul knave, I'll knock thee down.

(*He knocks* ABNER *down, and tramples on him in his rage.* BRIMBURY *and* ADELHEID *try to pull him off. A great noise is heard at the cave's entrance.*)

CABANO

What means this noise? I am undone!

(LIEUT. YALE *of the troops, springs forward, followed by* LOUIS, TOM, *and his men.*)

YALE

Up with your hands! Drop each his gun,
Or death, a mystery to all,
A fright to those who hear his call
While unprepared, will surely lay
His stunning hand upon his prey.

CABANO

Ah, Johnny Rand! Ah, traitor knave!

(JOHNNY RAND, *with hands tied.*)

Hear first the truth, and do not rave.

LOUIS

This fellow here, you truly called
A knave, yet, sir, he skipped and crawled,
In eagerness he watched and chased,
And overlooked us, who retraced
Our hopeless course. By him not seen
We gained his rear through the ravine.
The rogue knew us, and we knew him,
And here we are. Though drear and dim,
The owl and groundhog here will dwell
When thou art hanged, thou beast of hell.

CABANO (*to Louis*)

Thou art the wretch who stood between
Me and these woodland's fairy-queen.

My life misguided, without aim,
In darkness, sir, from whence it came,
Again may end. These two old crows
Derided me; my gall still flows.
I challenge thee to mortal fight.
But, sir, beware. This hand did smite,
Antagonists who were thy peer.

LOUIS

I fear thee not. Yet thy career
Of stealth, of cruelty, and shame
Deserves the rope which thee will claim.

CABANO

I pray thee, sir, not me to spare,
But to comply. I am aware
My vain career, my hopeless trend,
In death obscure, now soon must end.
Give me one chance to wash the taint
Of cowardice without restraint
Off from my name, and thanks be thine.

LOUIS

Thy offer, sir, I must decline.
The wary fox caught in a trap
Thinks just as thou. Misfortune's lap
Has ever been the hatching place
Of good intentions to retrace
The erring step. Yet like the fox,
Whose innate stealth forever mocks
The thought of honesty and truth,
So doth the lie thy heart pollute.

YALE

Enough of words. The hornet stings
E'en when deprived of legs and wings.

We have not come here to debate
Such topics as now agitate
The tender strings in this scamp's breast,
Who soon will be in bracelets dressed.

CABANO

Enough insult! My last resort
I must exhaust. Revenge, pour forth
Like lightning-flash, strike this man's heart,
(*Pointing to Louis.*)
Who could have saved me from shame's dart.

(*He springs toward* ADELHEID *with a keen dagger, with intent to stab her, but* ABNER *trips him, and he falls on his own weapon, mortally wounded.*)

LOUIS (*springing to* ADELHEID'S *side, speaking to* ABNER)

O God be thanked that he did fail!
My father dear, thy will prevail.
No longer will I thy command
In selfishness despise, withstand.
For thou hast saved her. Even more,
His dreadful vengeance to the core
Came near to strike thy son. Have thanks.

ABNER

My naughty boy, e'en fate loves pranks.
The wisdom which in school we learn
Oft fails, when tested, I discern.
My theories, which yesterday
Reached to the skies in grand array,
Have fled before this sweet child's smile,
Are banished now, and in exile.

ADELHEID

Oh father, speak. My heart stands still.

BRIMBURY

Fear not, my child, 'twas all God's will,
His ways are not the ways of man.
A labyrinth is His life-plan,
Which we, without the leading thread,
Ne'er could explore. This crisis led
To such results as none foresaw.

ABNER

And thou shalt be my child-in-law,
And love shall bind me as it bound
My truant boy to thee.

CABANO

This crisis, too, brought on my doom;
My spirit fades away in gloom.
For generations past my clan
From plunder lived, more often than
From honest toil. "Dam in the sea,
The storm in chains attach to thee";
Reform the fox, who e'er will steal,
Than try thy skill on men, who feel
The lash of law, the sting of shame,
And also, too, vice's innate flame,
Which centuries ago, did blaze,
In sire's hearts, with scorching rays.

ADELHEID

I pity thee, thou poorest man.

CABANO

Then pray hand me that water can.

(*He drinks.*)

Ah, thou art kind. My sullied life
Disgusted me. In earnest strife

I often tried my course to mend,
But, rudderless, divined my end,
And drifted back, now here to sink.

LOUIS

Despair not, man! Another drink!

CABANO (*after drinking*)

I pray not, Lord, for me in fear
That selfish prayer offends thine ear;
Nor dare I raise my voice to pray
For those my hand did try to slay,
And who my intercession weak
Can easy spare, and ne'er will seek.
But, Lord, my thanks, thanks most sincere
Accept, I pray, with willing ear,
For leaving childless me to die;
The worm of vice will multiply
In me no more, which I, though late,
With all my heart appreciate.

(*He dies.*)

LOUIS

Uncommon man. His end doth show
Philosophers like him may know
Not how to live, yet his last breath
Showed he could die a worthy death.

The End

STRIFE AND PEACE

A Drama in Four Acts

Dramatic Personnel

Nate, *a volunteer.*
Martin Simms, *a miner.*
Mr. Englesby, *a farmer.*
Mrs. Englesby, *his wife.*
Maud, *their daughter.*
Mortimer Glenn, *an adventurer.*
Mr. Sombre, *a farmer.*
Mary Green, *a friend of Maud.*
Gen. Duval.
Gen. Swift.
Col. Brideslee.
Capt. Elbow.
An army surgeon.
Five prospectors.
Mr. Carrol, *a philanthropist.*

ACT I.

Scene I. (*Iowa, a rough hillside.*)

(*Enter* Martin Simms, *a miner, with pick-ax in hand.*)

Simms. Thy womb, O earth, with treasures filled to burst,
Again I pierce, in search for wealth accursed:
Still, not accursed, for when e'en gold doth fail
With statesman's art combined, lead may prevail.
Both lead and steel, when justice is outraged,
Oft right the wrong by mean oppressors waged.
(*Picks up a chip and scans it closely.*)

Ah, mother earth, with foresight planned and built
Wert thou, and not by chance in space outspilt;
Though precious metals thy intestines fill,
O'er which the greedy quarrel, well or ill.
Thou givest us, too, an antidote to break
The tyrant's rule, which causes them to quake.

(*Enter* JOHN ENGLESBY, *smoking a clay pipe.*)

ENGLESBY. Your prospects good? Ah, friend, strike sturdy blows;
The mother lode lay bare; strike hard, who knows
How soon the product of this barren hill
Shall be required muskets' mouths to fill?
For slavery, the greatest curse of all
Which erring men can here on earth befall
Or ever meet, in boldness now doth raise
Its hydra-heads with hatred fierce ablaze.

SIMMS. I see it come, the muffled sounds I hear,
Whose clamor shall dismay the proud, who sneer
At equal rights, God's foremost gift to man.
Huge shadows float, such spectres as foreran
All epochs great. Presageful I perceive
That awful strife will soon asunder cleave
The North and South, engaged in bloody war,
And feel its scourge approaching from afar.

ENGLESBY (*examining a piece of quartz*) This landscape rough, with stunted oaks bedecked,
Unfruitful, sear, with boulders strewn and checked,
Reminds me oft of men whose outer garb,
Unpromising, seems naught but thorn and barb.;
Yet, deep concealed, reached but by those who seek,
Are treasures found, most rare, which do bespeak
That precious wealth in hidden shaft abounds
Far oftener than where blithe laughter sounds.

SIMMS. The mountains, hills, so vast, are similar
All o'er the earth, seen near or from afar,
Yet one the purest gold alone doth guard
While baser metals our search reward
In other parts. The deadly lead as well
As precious quartz, in human minds doth dwell.

(*Enter* NATE, *excited.*)

NATE. The dice are cast, fate will now raise his arm,
And in his track death's messengers will swarm,
Destroying swift, what patient work and toil
Have wrested from both elements and soil.
The war is on. Ft. Sumpter's brazen guns
Are quieted by those whom freedom shuns.
The war is on. And futile, vain, and weak,
Are measures now, such as for peace would seek.
The hurricane is naught compared with man,
Whose selfishness and rage we daily scan.

SIMMS. No error, friend? Though long I feared 'twould come.

NATE. Ah, everywhere now sounds sedition's drum.

ENG. Alas, alas! Much noble blood will flow
Ere peace will reign, ere force will overthrow
The hosts in arms, prepared to stand or fall,
To die. Aye, die far sooner than recall
The stern decree, in darker ages hatched,
When might was right, and cunning, worth outmatched.
In infancy, our nation overlooked
The noxious germ of slavery, and brooked
The consequences which at first were small,
Which grew and spread, wise thinkers to appall.
If anywhere blame rightfully can rest
Our forefathers with it should be assessed.

This generation's blame did but consist
In weakness, and a strong desire to twist:
A wrong inherited, to take the shape
Of righteousness, from self-loath to escape.

NATE. I'll haste to join the forces of the North
Now gathering, and will devote henceforth
My modest gifts, my feeble strength and force,
To free the slaves, whom clanking chains divorce
From rights divine, who now in bondage yearn,
While their oppressors proud refuse to learn
Such lessons as the onward trend of time
Propounds to all, in ev'ry state and clime.

ENG. Aye, aye, the time will come, and come it must
When justice will triumph, when in the dust
The fetters fall, which now to our shame
Reduce a race, whose only fault and blame
Is shade of skin, who otherwise as we
Both love and hate, and long for liberty.

SIMMS. Thou speak'st my mind. But Nate, my boy, my friend,
Act not in haste, the dangers comprehend.

NATE. I comprehend that overripe the time
That we must strike, that wavering is a crime.
There is a time when leisure is a grace,
And other times when deeds are more in place.
The harvest comes not when it suits our whim,
But when matured the grain. My life, each limb
I'll gladly risk, if such a sacrifice
Can right the wrong which time e'er multiplies.

SIMMS. O noble youth. A secret pang and pain
My wasted heart doth mournful entertain.

A son like thee would swell with pride my breast;
I miss the child which I might have caressed.

NATE. An outcast, too, am I, unknown to kin,
And often, too, I felt that pang within.
Yet why repine? Love never was confined
To limits, such as kindred e'er combined.
Love, like the atmosphere, and light of day,
Like morning dew, like rippling fountain's spray,
Refreshes all, skips only those who hide
While time speeds on, and only shades abide.

(*The curtain drops.*)

SCENE II

(*In* ENGLESBY'S *log house, front room.*)

(MAUD, MR. *and* MRS. ENGLESBY.)

MAUD. O foolish war! O men devoid of wit.

MRS. E. Why foolish, child? Though cruel, I admit.

MAUD. My mother dear, I truly sympathize
With those poor slaves debarred from exercise
Of inborn rights. Yet foolish, rash, and bold
It doth appear. For why should we uphold
And why defend a cause which doth concern
Not our state? When will men ever learn
To prize the love which they at home could gain
Instead their blood in rash exploits to drain.

ENG. True, true enough. Most wars had e'er their source
In selfishness, inclined to gain by force
Such ends as truth and justice would condemn.

MRS. E. The southerners repeat this stratagem.

ENG. We have no choice, the crisis must be met.
If we this curse faint-hearted now abet,
And thus escape from momentary pain
We'll reap in time a fearful hurricane.
Injustice thrives like weeds, the plague, and pest,
If not in time by proper means redressed.

MRS. E. A grievous thing is war and mortal strife.

ENG. Yet not the greatest loss, the loss of life.
The loss of self-respect is more by far;
Ideals shattered like a fallen star
Leave naught behind. No future doth invite
The soul despairing of eternal right.
But death, if faced in such a cause as this,
Gives hope to reach beyond the dark abyss.

(*Exit* MR. *and* MRS. E.)

(MAUD *alone.*)

MAUD. I feel 'tis true, each word my parent spoke.
I, too, a slave, but mine's anothers yoke.
Oh, despot love. Yet willingly we yield,
Thou ruler of the greater battlefield.
Thy realm exists wherever life appears;
Thy gifts are joy and often bitter tears.

(*She sobs.*)

They tell me, Nate, that feeble-looking lad
Whose love I scorned, has gone his strength to add
Where moral force of highest grade alone
Can win the day. Alas, could I atone
And ease his mind! But nay, he came too late.
O Mortimer, my love is thine. My fate
Is hinged to thee. O God, I pray thee, hear!
Save him for me, shield him in his career.

(*Exit. Curtain falls.*)

SCENE III.

(*Enter* MORTIMER GLENN, SIMMS, *and* SOMBRE *a neighbor.*)

MORT. The time's unrest infective doth appear;
While Nate goes south, I now will westward steer.
I'm not a beast e'er thirsting for the gore
Of those who differ in their inmost core
From my convictions, even though I feel
I'm quite a match for such a one whose zeal
Crops out at sight of other mortal's ways,
And thus his incapacity betrays.

SIMMS (*sarcastically*)

Capacity? The term is qualified.
Thou, who art thinking now thyself to hide,
Art capable as is the hare, whose heels
Are visible, when danger near him steals.

MORT. Peace, peace, old coon. Since when art thou so brave?
Old badger, thou, go hence into thy cave;
Go dig for lead, in darkness search and prowl;
Spare men like me from thy satanic scowl.

SOMBRE. I pray you, sir, his crippled limbs observe.
He stood the test, and showed his splendid nerve.

MORT. What's nerve to me? By other means I'll sway.
Success is his who knows how to array
Opposing elements with skilful hand,
To fight his battles and thereby expand
His usefulness. He's lord and king who rules
Not by rude force, but by the aid of fools,
Who, cheaply bought by flattery, devote
Their clumsy gifts, his scheming to promote.

(*Smiles at* SIMMS, *and slaps him on the shoulder.*)

And thus, you see, my venerable sage,
'Tis wisdom, sir, that counts, not size nor age.

SIMMS. Ah, wisdom, sir? The article on tap
Which thou outpour'st, in which thou dost enwrap
Thy precious self, is wisdom even less
Than dross is gold, or tiger's paws, caress.

MORT. Gold, yes, gold, ah, precious gold to seek,
This is my aim. While others steam and reek
From human blood, shed with an aim to please
Their own fantastic whim, I grasp and seize
The chance now offered, not alone to snap
My finger at old Abe's recruiting trap,
But to obtain the gold which fate in heaps
Has stored away for him who overleaps
Such paltry scruples as the common thrall
E'er holds in awe. What can a man befall
Who has the gold which can unlock all hearts?
With gold, I'll buy the fame which hero's arts
Ne'er can attain. Distinction and renown
Is his who holds the precious wealth, the crown
Of all that fate doth offer to mankind;
E'en love it buys, though poets call it blind.

SIMMS. Aye, love it buys, the kind akin to thine,
An equal trade, a trade which doth combine
A knave and fool, the first, in mammon's toils,
The last, a sport of fate in life's turmoils.
And fame it buys? Ah, truly, sir, no doubt.
Yet fame bought thus remains as dead throughout
Its short-lived reign, as marble carved by hands
Unskilled. Thrice blessed is he who understands
God's sacred laws, whose genius doth teach
Him how to gain the wealth within his reach

Without oppressing weaker fellow-man,
Who, less discerning, end where he began.
Thrice blessed, I say, if wealth gained thus is spent
Unselfishly for those whom accident
May overtake; or for the sick and poor,
Whose blessings will in gratefulness conjure
A spirit called content, which e'er will wait
On such a one whose love is his estate.

SOMBRE. Thou speakest well. Thy utterance is true.
Stern truth will live, and e'er its course pursue
While sophistries, in glittering garments clad,
Are dead ere born, extinct their vital thread.

MORT. No sophistries. The wealth I seek is real.
Your sentiments to theorists appeal,
Who waste their lives in reveries morbose,
Which lead to naught. While yet life's current flows,
In its full strength, I shall not rest nor tire,
To gain my end, my one supreme desire.
Ah, give me gold, and friends and foes alike
Will humbly bow, and most submissive strike
Their breasts, confirming their esteem profound,
And, echo-like, 'twill hundred-fold resound.
Ah, give me gold, and valor I can spare,
And critics, with their vain and shallow ware,
I'll placate soon, for, like the carrion kite,
On refuse they will sate their appetite.

SIMMS. I'll not deny that men of wealth impress
With awe or fear, the multitude who bless
Them not. Yet clear it is, thy wealth, not thou,
Is worshipped thus. While one, 'neath brazen brow
His envy hides, his hatred fierce conceals,
Another one, his fear and dread reveals,

By cringing low before the foot of him
Who, armed with gold, is well prepared to dim
Or to increase the luster of glad eyes.
A blessing or a curse, great wealth implies.
A modest beast is he, who lives and thrives
As critics do, on offal, and connives
At glaring wrongs, if men of wealth do steep
Their grasping hands in guilt. But should fate sweep
Aside the mammon which their souls adore,
The critic doth of all the loudest roar,
Condemning them. And none but he alone
Whom thou didst aid, when need pressed forth his moan,
Will stand by thee, when other men annoy
The fallen idol with malignant joy.

MORT. The burden of thy stale, insipid song
Affects not me. Old fellow, go along.

SOMBRE. Why, let him speak; check not the fountain's flow.
List thou, O man: as scarce as winter's snow
In summer time, are men with speech equipped
Who dare with words of doubtful meaning stripped
The truth to voice, the ever-lasting truth,
The stepping-stone to reach eternal youth.

SIMMS. My time's soon up, and I must haste away;
Another word, and I'll have said my say.
E'en should your fortunes never thee forsake,
Your greed for more will from thy slumbers take
The rest and peace which greater hearts refresh.
And day by day, the never-slackening mesh
Of mammon's net will tighten and obscure
All else but gain, and thus a state mature
Of disregard towards nobler aims and deeds;
And when advanced in years, your nature feeds

Not on the joys which God with hand profuse
Outspreads for those who never did misuse
The pound of wealth entrusted to their care
Or gifts of genius, or talents rare,
But on the fear which certainty creates
That death, the leveler of all estates,
Will, at one stroke, the substance gained in years,
Which indispensible to thee appears,
Make valueless, and lay thee low beside
The beggar, whom in life thou didst deride,
But who in peace and hope closed life's account,
While dark despair will drown you in its fount,
And when entombed, for worms a choice repast,
Your former friends, whom you forsook when blast
Or storm them helpless found, whom you'd divest
Of the last pittance they on earth possessed,
They will not weep, nor will the curious throng
Indulge in tears, or heart-felt mourning song.
And when your grave is filled with kindred dust,
Your heirs begin each other to mistrust,
And, quarreling for thy estate, forget
The wretch who throve on brother's tears and sweat.
But let's be off. 'Tis vain to preach to those
Whose single thought in narrow channels flows.

(*Exit* SOMBRE *and* SIMMS.)

MORT. Ah, vain indeed. Your bray, old fool, suspend.
Would I such rules as these observe, I'd end
In poverty, as all the heroes do,
Who like thyself, misleading paths pursue.

(*Walking the floor and musing.*)

Why all this fuss? 'Tis gold I want, ah, gold.
All else in time will come, ere I am old.

Experience, which every day we gain,
The earth-born pilgrim oft doth entertain
With solid lumps of wisdom knocked into
His whole make-up, to stick like pitch and glue.
But gold alone, the greatest living force
'Neath heaven's dome, e'er takes another course.
'Though the unthinking throng has ample sense
To know its value and its consequence;
Yet most of them, like gobblers blind with rage,
O'erleap the mark, while shrewder men engage
This wasted force, with rare, unfailing skill,
Their ready purse with ringing gold to fill.

(*Knocking. Enter* MAUD.)

MORTIMER (*bowing to her*). Good cheer be thine! And how dost thou enjoy
The time propitious, with those who employ
Its moments rare, as thou hast ever done,
Who smile when glad, and aim distress to shun?

MAUD. Ah, thanks to thee! Yet 'tis no virtue great
To hoard the sunbeams, fleeting swift like fate.
And if distress in bygone days did spare
Me with its sting, yet am I well aware
That those immune from daily harm and pain
Fall victims oft, to greater evil's train.

MORTIMER. Ah, what a thought! Why, thou art really pale.
What aileth thee? What harm did thee assail?

MAUD (*excited and blushing*). Thou errest, sir! As usual, quite well
To-day I am, and hope time will dispel
And rout the phantoms, which, in somber views
The future paints, in most disheartening hues.

(*Drops her face in her hands.*)

MORTIMER (*confused, aside*). I'm certain now her love
is mine for aye,
And she'll be cheered, if I my aims betray.

(*Aloud to her.*)

I've come to-day — preparing to depart —
To greet thee, and enjoy before I start
Another smile, one of the cheerful kind,
Which on thy face a worthy playground find;
And which, when I am gone, my lonely hours
Will consolate, when care my soul devours.

MAUD. I have forseen that it would come to this,
For war is like a dire precipice,
Which swallows up the flower of the land.
Yet go thou hence, I will not plaintive stand
'Twixt thee and what thy conscience doth advise;
Not men alone should bring a sacrifice.

MORTIMER (*taking her hand in his, and speaking confused,*) Thou art misled; not towards the bloody field
My steps I'll lead, but where the soil doth yield
Abundantly the yellow grains of gold.
Ah, fare thee well! May I again behold
Thyself on my return, not sad, distressed,
But by the fates and fleeting time caressed.

(*Exit in haste.*)

MAUD (*alone, on her knees*). Ah, fare thee well, thou
noblest and best!
Thy pious fraud, invented to arrest
My selfish fears so foolishly betrayed,
Deceives me not. Alas, have I not prayed,
O God, to save me from this bitter doom?
The one I love to spare, and not entomb

My highest hopes ere thy fruition found?
Yet, thanks to thine! Unharmed, quite whole and sound,
If such thy will, he may return to grace,
Side by side with me, his destined place.
Ah, thanks be thine! A dastard I despise,
Though live he may, and high in fortune rise.
Ah, fare thee well! A hero shall compel
And hold my love. Oh, fare thee, fare thee well.

(*Curtain drops.*)

ACT II.

Scene I.

(*A hillside in the California mountains.*)

Mortimer (*alone in the mountains*). Ah, here I am,
and there the ramparts rise
On lofty heights, ascending towards the skies,
Which vainly try, with awe-inspiring front,
To scare away mankind, who e'er are wont
To seek and utilize, with rare forethought,
What nature in her secret shops hath wrought.
(*Pausing a while.*)
No sentimentalist am I, nor will
With childish scruples, precious time I kill.
(*He takes a bag of gold-dust from his pocket and scatters it about.*)
Here is the seed which planted shall produce
With proper care, a crop most rich, profuse.
Henceforth in ease my path I shall pursue;
I'll sow and reap — let lesser spirits rue.
(*Footsteps heard from afar. He kneels down and gathers some soil in a pan.*)

(*Enter* MR. CARROL, *a philanthropist.*)

CARROL. Good morning, sir. 'Tis a refreshing scene,
This landscape here, where rock on rock doth lean,
Where nature's hand a feast for eyes hath wrought
In grandeur unsurpassed, with beauty fraught.

MORTIMER. Aye, more than that! Here in the dirt dispised
Lies more than thou hast ably eulogized;
Here's the essence which kings and lords creates,
And fame obscures, of which the hero prates.

CARROL. What can it be? Ah, gold, of course, that tells;
I know its force, and met its magic spells.
Yet, after all, I'd choose that which remains
Which others share with me, where each one gains.
And still the capital from which all draw
Remains intact, where time's ne'er sated jaw
Alone can mar. I mean the glorious views
Of canyons deep, and peaks in gorgeous hues.
Thy claim, if rich, may bless thyself or thine;
My claim as public wealth, I should define.
Your claim, when it is drained, doth cheer no more ;
But mine remains, an inexhaustive store.

MORTIMER. All very true, yet do in all I share
Which thou dost claim. I pray you to compare
The lot of him who feasts his eye on things
Which nourish not, with him who firmly clings
To that which all joy-giving things commands
And which — Ah, man! 'Tis here beneath my hands.

CARROL (*Stooping to look down*). I wish thee well.
'Twill place thee in a state
To help, and act as right-hand man of fate

Toward those less favored in life's fitful strife,
Who struggle on, sustaining scarce their life;
Yet will it not contentedness secure
Nor will't for thee immunity insure
Against disease, 'gainst accident or death,
Which comes unheard, and steals away thy breath.

MORTIMER. Would'st thou then rather see the human race
In idleness remain, or pleasures chase?

CARROL. I'd like to see the rich and mighty toil
Enough to earn their bread, their salt and oil,
While they are young. And those who stunt their mind
And wreck their frame by overwork, who find
But scant reward for toil which ne'er doth cease,
To them I'd give, if I had but a lease
Of providence, each day enough of rest;
And culture, too, I'd give, to make them blessed
As are the rich, who fill their favored place,
With modesty, and all-ennobling grace.
Wealth is a blessing, if it has been gained
In noble strife, not by oppression stained;
Yet there are those whose eye, in search for pelf,
In baseness roams, admiring naught but self.

(*Exit* CARROL.)

MORTIMER. Ah, hear him croak, ah, hear the saint who sins
In dreams alone, but waking, ever spins
A righteous web, intended smaller fry,
Like me, for instance, mocking to decry.

(*Pauses.*)

Ah, go you hence! Thy tongue so glib and smooth,
Shall serve my aims and purposes, forsooth.

'Twill not be long till this, my bait, will draw
The finest string of fish I ever saw.
And then I'll prove, and prove it without stint
That wealth is life, and life with something in't.

(*Curtain drops.*)

SCENE II

(*Five prospectors in camp.*)

1ST PROSPECTOR. 'Tis tiresome, far more so than I thought,
This chase for wealth, which so far only brought
But disappointments, blasted hopes, to me.
I'm like the clown, who claimed his pedigree
Assured success, but in his summersault
He fell far short, and on the carpet sprawled.

2D PROS. Ah, pedigrees, in clowns or common fools,
Including us, and kings who sit on stools
Of gold or brass to match their haughty pride,
Are like the tinsel which they need to hide
Their mind's defect, their heart's contracted state—
Are valueless. But vanity they sate.
Give pedigrees to him who has the spleen.
Give me for my sweet babes and my Kathleen
Enough of that which some as mammon spurn,
And others seek before might's shrine to burn,
And I, contented with my lot, no more
Will spendthrift's harbor seek, nor miser's shore.

3D PROS. I wish I'd stayed where love unfolds her charms,
Where humble hearts now wait, and open arms.
I, who in all my foolish dreams espied
Uncounted wealth, now find myself belied.

1ST PROS. We all agree now, as the 'coons agreed,
Which hounds in search for sport had chased and treed,
That those who aim too high may starve encased
In splendors trim, by fate's odd pranks misplaced;
While others in their low, but well stored cave,
In safety find that which in vain we crave.

2D PROS. Aye, and before fate treed this silly gang
We all agreed, the precious metal's clang
And nothing else should call the fortune in,
Which we foresaw would benefit our kin.
Alas, once more we learned, ah, far too well,
That strong desires man allows to dwell
Within his mind until his judgment sees
Things which are not, but seem. He pays the fees
Which teacher life exacts for aid uncalled
Yet needed, oft for our good installed.

4TH PROS. All silly talk. Zounds, are ye men or boys?
Your metal's dross, aye; far beneath alloys
From which is coined, the currency esteemed
And known as brass, which is by many deemed
To be in value next to real worth;
As doth the dawn approach light's sportful mirth.

1ST PROS. E'en brass, which may, at more propitious times,
Results achieve, is here like tongueless chimes.

4TH PROS. Have patience, sir. Old Carroll, whom you know
To be as pure as freshly fallen snow,
Looked on, but yesterday with his own eyes,
When the dark stranger, who now restless plies
His pick and pan in yonder barren vale,
Exhumed real dust, which we to find did fail.

5TH PROS. 'Tis not an hour since I met "Doc." Hall,
Who me informed, Mort. Glenn would surely fall
A victim to the fever's threatening jaw,
Unless from hence he doth in haste withdraw.

1ST PROS. Ah, fortune's tricks! In vain we searched for wealth,
'Though sound we were. But he who's broke in health,
The treasures found, which he can't utilize.
He who digests, oft to his sad surprise,
Lacks that which all his wants could fill and quench,
And which dyspeptics have, but must retrench.

3D PROS. Not so, my friend. Suppose we buy his rights,
Then we may thrive, and he, whom sickness smites,
Will have his due. And care, which otherwise
His ills would swell, will him no more surprise.

1ST PROS. Forget we now misfortune, failure, drought.

(*All together.*)

Buy him out, yes, we will buy him out.

(*Curtain drops.*)

SCENE III

MORTIMER (*sitting on a rock eating his lunch, his horse tied to a bush*). Ha, ha, ha, ha! Four times my clever ruse
Bore fruit to me. None can myself accuse
Of being slow or dull. I am but one,
Yet have I scores of men with ease undone,
Who, like October flies, flock in my trap
In thoughtless haste. Ah, man, who dost enwrap

Thyself in pride and wisdom's seeming garb,
Thou art a dolt, e'er grasping for the barb
Which such as I, the essence of mankind,
Place in your reach, and you are sure to find,
While we retain, with foresight rare and skill,
The flower and fruit for our spacious till.

(*Musing a while.*)

Ha, ha, how did those precious dupes rush in!
How sure of gain they felt, how they did grin
While in their minds delusion's magic quill
Air-castles drew, short-lived and volatile.
The shark must live, and since I am a shark,
I'll watch for prey — but ho there, listen, hark!

(*Tramping sounds. Enter 2d prospector on horseback.*)

SECOND PROSPECTOR. Infernal knave, cheat, rogue, and hypocrite!
Disgorge your spoils, or I'll a deed commit
Which shall enrich, with your black, greedy soul,
Old Satan's realm. Out with the gold you stole.

(*Both draw and fire. 2d prospector falls from his horse.*)

Oh, I am killed! O my beloved Kathleen!
Oh my sweet babes, had I but this foreseen!
To die like this, O God! slain by a thief,
Who doth triumph, while I despair in grief!
My sweet Kathleen, no more thy smile shall cheer
The heart of him who now is dying here!
O Lord! shield her! My infant babes, oh guard!
Ne'er did I think that dying is so hard.

(*He dies.*)

MORTIMER (*very excited*). Oh, hellish fiend! Not murder was my aim,
But wealth alone to chase, wealth was my game;

But thou, oh fiend, who sulphur vapors quaffs
'Twixt brimstone walls, and who now doubtless laughs
At me, your dupe; thou who dost haunt for sport
Earth's woeful creatures with thy whole cohort
Of frightful images, who bring dismay;
Thou, who the Furies dost employ, to prey
Upon man's rest, when darkness mercy shows,
While it, its shrouding cloak upon them throws,
Their sores to hide; thou did'st once more make plain
That he is thine who hopes to entertain
In selfish aims, thy black and ruthless self,
And yet escape with all his stolen pelf.
Fiend, incarnate! Who to thee looks for aid,
Is lost to hope, a slave in bondage laid.

(*Musing a while.*)

Had I not all which I did need to thrive?
Are there not those who fate's fell strokes survive
E'en without wealth, more safely than the thrall
Who falls when his ill-gotten wealth doth fall?
I see my guilt, alas, too late, too late!
What's done is done, wherefore equivocate?
To cheat ourselves is but a pleasing sham,
"To cheat the devil or his worthy dam."
I'll try no more, for they are sure to reap
All they desire, while I retain to keep
Naught but remorse. E'en now I feel its pangs,
And see the doom, which threatening o'er me hangs.
From hence, from hence! Man's judgement to frustrate
I'll try at least; all else now seems too late.
O rustling leaves, O whispering winds, oh hush!
I dread your voices, which, accusing, rush
Upon my ear. From hence, without delay!
I fear your doubtful, underhanded way.

Off, off, away! Nemesis, fearful scourge!
Why beckon'st thou? What claims hast thou to urge?

(*He bounds on his horse, and gallops away, as if the furies were upon his heels.*)

(*Curtain falls.*)

ACT III

Scene I.

(*A camp of the northern army. Officers in the general's tent.*)

Gen. Duval. The art of war is like a game of chess;
Each move for well or ill may raise, depress
The chances which each side must sternly face.
In war and peace, each man must fill his place,
Or failure will o'erwhelm him in swift strife,
Be wealth at stake, or precious human life.

Capt. Elbow. In this, our case, the stake doth more include
Than wealth or life. 'Tis of vast magnitude:
For slavery, a remnant of an age
When might prevailed, doth now brave men engage,
Who fearless risk what others prize beyond
All else on earth to break the black man's bond.

Gen. Duval. As I remarked, a well-considered move
Doth count for much. Would not a judge approve
The disposition which the hard-pressed foe
To-day assumed? Although we were not slow,
We came too late the hill beyond to seize
Where now the southern colors meet the breeze.

(*The report of a cannon is heard.*)

COL. BRIDESLEE. Nor are they slow to daunt us, as you see,
Or rather hear. Yond hillock seems the key
Which may decide the struggle yet to face;
'Tis for their guns a most commanding place.

GEN. DUVAL. And what is worse, although our guns outmatch
The few they have, we can ne'er hope to catch
Them where they are, nor harm them on that hill,
Which, fortress-like, will baffle our skill.

CAPT. ELBOW. 'Tis clear, in strength we are more than their peers,
Yet is their station such that pioneers
May well beware. One side has ample force,
The other cunningly has had recourse
To strategy, and may yet, in the end,
Prevail o'er those who but on force depend.

GEN. DUVAL. Brute force succumbs, when intellect it meets.
In all life's combats, genius defeats
All ruder elements. The storm in chains,
And tearing floods in harness it restrains;
E'en men who, heedless in their rage, abuse
Their favored place in life, it oft subdues.

(*Pauses a while.*)

To me 'tis clear, we must from here withdraw
Or spike their guns: a task to fill with awe
The stoutest heart, a deed which hopeless seems,
Yet worth a trial by one who life esteems.
A stake most apt, to risk in freedom's cause,
Where loss may gain imply. One who applause

And outward show doth scorn, a volunteer,
Go, Brideslee, seek at once, and bring him here.

(Exit Brideslee)

Capt. Elbow. I have in mind a lad, most delicate
He doth appear. All call him simply Nate,
Whose feats of strength, whose moral worth bespeak
A fitness for the task from which the weak
May well recoil. Ah, there at Brideslee's side,
I see him come, whom none dare "coward" chide.

(*Enter* Brideslee *and* Nate.)

Nate. Your servant, sir! The problem which to solve,
You've honored me, doth truly much involve.

Gen. Duval. Bethink yourself, my son. No trifling feat
Awaits him who goes forth to-night to meet
All terrors which this ruthless war has bred,
Which follow close, where e'er his footsteps tread.

Nate. What I may lose, but me alone affects;
What I may gain, may aid the architects;
Who build for hosts, who now for freedom cry.
What I may lose, God lent to me, and I
Most willingly repay, when he his due,
Which grows and doth increasingly accrue,
From me demands. What I may gain, outweighs
A hundred-fold the danger which dismays
But those who doubt the justice of their deeds.
Procrastination e'er on doubting feeds.

Col. Brideslee. Well said, brave youth, the elements in thee
Forestall success. Thou hast in high degree
The proper sense, so seldom found in youth.

NATE. That praise I earned, I earnestly dispute.
In advance paid, your servant shirks his task;
When heat prevails, in sunshine none would bask.

GEN. DUVAL. Your words are apt. Yet since the shining orb
Will soon sink low, and darkness light absorb,
Reveal thy plans, for thou shalt have full sway;
What means wilt thou employ, what signs display?

NATE. A feint retreat at once to execute,
I'd recommend. The night, pitch-dark and mute,
All this will tend the foe to reassure.
Ventriloquist am I, and may allure
The enemy from where I chance to creep;
And if the issue such as we would reap,
A rocket I shall animate to fly,
To show thee where the fangless serpents lie.

CAPT. ELBOW. No reptile bites while venom it doth lack;
Nor engine speeds when it has jumped the track.

GEN. DUVAL. Your plan's approved. At once retreat, retreat!
Let fleeting time us not of prospects cheat!

(*Trumpets and drums sound. Tumult without.*)

(*Curtain drops.*)

SCENE II

(GEN. DUVAL *and officers in tent. Enter* GEN. SWIFT, *commander of the southern forces, in charge of* CAPT. ELBOW.)

GEN. SWIFT (*dejected*). Pray, sir, accept my sword. Though keen its edge,
'Twould folly be to charge the living hedge

Without the guns, which doubtless thou did'st fear
And consequently of their virtue shear.

GEN. DUVAL (*taking the sword*). I'll not deny the guns so shrewdly placed
Did menance me, and hence had them effaced.
Self-preservation prompted thee to choose
The place you did. Mine is the same excuse.

GEN. SWIFT. I blame thee not, 'tis I whose prudence failed.
What demons, sir, were those, who thus assailed
Us spirit-like, enwrapped in darkness' cloak?
Inferno's prince ne'er struck such telling stroke.

GEN. DUVAL. A prince it was, untitled, though, and plain,
A prince of light and virtue, in whose train
No demons move. One lad, quite young, alone
Hath thee undone, thy power overthrown.

(*Noises without; enter soldiers, surgeon, and* NATE, *with his left arm in a sling, supported by a soldier.*)

GEN. DUVAL. Praise God! My son, I feared that thou wert lost.
A giant's task, nor at a strifling cost,
Hast thou achieved. Each drop of blood which thou
To-night hast spilt, the pain which shades thy brow
A carnage did prevent, the thought of which
Might stun the brave. Oft doth one's deed enrich
The multitude, who blind and helpless grope,
Who aimlessly debate, despair, and hope
For remedies to cure their present ills,
Yet fail, while one the common hope fulfils.

NATE. Praise thou not me, nor blame the bird whose wing
A snowslide starts, which doth destruction bring
To those who dwell within the path thus doomed.
All that exists and ever shape assumed
As well as active life brought forth by birth,
And intellect which guides most things on earth,
Are instruments with which the Supreme Power
His ends doth gain, each day, and every hour.

GEN. SWIFT (*bitterly*). So doth it seem. Nor would I be surprised
To learn said instruments thus eulogized
Were all employed, the Yankee cause to aid,
A cause for which they our rights invade.

NATE. Be just, oh sir! The human cause, you mean.
Your inmost thoughts before the world you screen;
Yet when alone, a voice which ne'er can'st still,
Your conscience moves, your nobler parts doth thrill,
Proclaiming loud, "No masters, and no slaves,
But brothers all!" Oh, sir, this curse engraves
A blot most dark upon our nation's shield,
Which makes thee blush, and others weep concealed.

GEN. SWIFT. Alas, much truth thy youthful zeal reveals;
A heritage which to our greed appeals,
Is Slavery. We drag along the load
Of injustice, which darker times bestowed
Upon our sires. A common thing at first,
A habit next, and now a crime accursed.
In innocence neglected sprouts the seed,
And thrives where folly reigns, and errors lead.
Its bloom is shame, and vice the fruit it bears;
Why moralize? We are the lawful heirs

Of a vile system, which we must uphold,
Or poverty will closely us enfold.

NATE. Heroic hearts, and foresight more than all,
Which sees the doom to which this curse must fall,
Which kindred souls of freedom doth deprive,
Can here prevail. Oh why shouldst thou connive
At things unnatural, whose course is run,
Whose time is up, whose ruin has begun?

GEN. SWIFT. Ah, why indeed? Why do men ever choose
Both wealth and ease, well knowing they must lose
It all again, when death upon them calls?
The blacks are slaves, we whites are mammon's thralls.
'Tis an excuse we daily hear and meet:
"Reform in time: to-day, let's drink and eat."

NATE. I feel most faint and sore. Excuse, I pray,
One who needs rest, all else doth brook delay.

(*Exit* NATE *with soldier.*)

SURGEON. Brave fellow he. I fear his arm is lost.
To praise him justly would myself exhaust.

GEN. DUVAL. Praise, flattery, both children of one sire;
Praise overdone is sure to vex and tire
Those who for merit seek, not unearned fame.
With such a one, praise ever is the same
As flattery. The latter in its turn
Doth pass as parise. Self-seekers never spurn
Acclaim and noise, and all that's volatile,
Their empty lives, with emptiness to fill.

(*Curtain drops.*)

ACT IV

SCENE I

(*In* ENGLESBY'S *log house, front room.*)

(*Enter* MAUD.)

MAUD. Bewilderment, I feel I am thy toy;
My thoughts confused, half sorrow and half joy,
Find nowhere rest. I feel I've cause to weep
And weep I should, but new emotions creep
Through head and heart, which heretofore most strange,
Avoided me, elsewhere to romp and range.
Ah me, what news? I've looked for noble deeds
To Mort. alone, yet only Nate succeeds.
Mort. writes of wealth and ease, and then confounds
Me with all else. His message selfish sounds.

(*Sobs, but dries her tears again.*)

And Nate, poor Nate, whom fate may reconcile,
High minded, risked his life in Spartan style,
To end the strife before death's reaper grim
Began to mow. To him, and only him,
Who, orphaned, ne'er a kinsman's love did know,
All parents turn, with hearts that overflow
With gratefulness, and there again do prove
That universal love all things doth move.
The love begot by duty or blood ties
Is but the shade of that which doth arise
Spontaneous, and which, without restraint,
All may embrace, the bold, the meek, and faint.

(*Takes a letter from her bosom and reads.*)

DEAR MAUD: Farewell. God, whom I now invoke,
Has placed me where I, with one single stroke,

All may achieve, which otherwise may fail,
E'en though in force we should the foe assail.
Death thus to meet for me hath no dismay,
Since thine affection e'er from me did stray,
As doth the sunbeam at night's swift approach,
As doth the dove when enemies encroach
Upon her realm. Alas, couldst thou survey
The passion which most merciless did sway
Within my heart, thou wouldst at least forgive
When I am dead that I aspired to live;
Life without thee its first incentive lacks,
A void to me. To thee, my love's a tax.
Farewell, farewell — my death, which I foresee
Doth me not grieve, may it bring peace to thee.

(*Wiping her fast-flowing tears.*)

Alas, poor Nate, thy life was saved, and I
Therefore rejoice. O heart, didst thou belie
Me when I chose? Ah, small regret I'd feel
If Mortimer, whose message doth reveal
A sordid mind, should ne'er to me return.
Poor crippled Nate, who dared thy love to spurn?
Woe me, I've cast aside that which I prize
Far more to-day than at the war-cloud's rise.
Alas, weak man, the "wherefore" and the "why"
Escape thy grasp. Most foolishly we sigh;
When to rejoice we've reason; and we laugh,
When we should weep, and not joy's nectar quaff.

(*Enter* MARY GREEN, *a friend and neighbor.*)

MARY. I greet thee, Maud. Hast thou not heard the news?

MAUD. Naught have I heard. My ignorance excuse.

MARY. Thy suitors both, the one from battlefield,
The other, from the western slopes, which yield

Wealth most profuse, returned but yesterday;
Both rich in that for which they sped away;
The former lost an arm, and gained renown,
The latter gathered wealth, but dark's his frown,
While Nate doth smile. Were I but thou
I'd know to choose the right one, I avow.

MAUD. Wert thou but I? Alas, I'm not myself,
Nor am I placed to choose, 'twixt worth and pelf.

(*Exit Mary in haste, upon hearing footsteps.*)

(*Enter Mortimer, extending his hand to Maud, who hesitatingly returns his greetings.*)

MORTIMER. At last! I've all which gives this life a zest.
One yearning yet remains, and all unrest
Shall speed from hence. A dukedom, I ,
With half my wealth, for thee would gladly buy.

MAUD. For me, why me? Such ideas I spurn.
Your aims are naught to me, not my concern.

MORTIMER. What, ho! How changed! Thy jokes are rather grim,
I'm richer than thou knowest. Each wish and whim
I shall fulfil, ere thou canst speak the word.
Be thou my queen, and let me be thy lord.

MAUD. Smooth are thy words, yet illy do compare
With them thy deeds. I pray, my feelings spare.

MORTIMER (*excited*). Deeds, what knowest thou of deeds? What, ho!
Didst thou, O fiend, who dwellest far below,
Forstall love's joy, ere I could taste its bliss?
To drag me to despair's hopeless abyss?
Grim specter, hence. Withdraw thy fangs, remorse,
Thy poisoned fangs! Let me pursue my course.

Lost, lost, all's lost! In life's long game succeeds
None who, like me, but selfish promptings heeds.
Too late I learn that he who gives receives;
And he who takes but obligations leaves
To be repaid a hundred-fold. Regret
And woe's the fruit which crime e'er did beget.

(*Looking out of the window, he sees* SIMMS, *the miner, walking in the distance, and mistakes him for his victim.*)

There, there again, remorseless shade thou art,
If thou dost hither come, I must depart.
Off, off, away. Mild are, O hell, thy pangs,
With the dismay compared, which o'er me hangs.

(*He rushes out like a madman towards the cliffs.*)

(*Curtain drops.*)

SCENE II

(*In* SIMM'S *cabin.* MARTIN SIMMS. *Enter* NATE.)

SIMMS. This hour be blessed, and blessèd be the light
Which shines on thee, whose countenance so bright
Shows not the grief which well it might betray,
In smaller minds, who ne'er the issues weigh.

NATE. My loss is great, yet far outweighs the gain
Which we achieved, the momentary strain.

SIMMS. Child of my heart, thou art a man among
The bravest men, in deeds, and not by tongue.
But show thy wounds. Could I but now replace
With my old limb the arm which thee did grace!
Thy arm is gone, the tool which but obeys,
Thy guiding mind remains, which e'er outweighs
The instrument, a soulless thing at best,
And will replace its loss with interest.

NATE (*uncovering the stump of his arm*). A useless
stump. Yet stumps imply, make plain,
That naught which liveth can its state maintain.
This stunted limb proclaims to him whose mind
Can read life's runes, and look before, behind,
With seer's eye, that landmarks of the past
Which we call stumps, are constantly amassed.
The task fulfilled, and death remodels forms
To shapes more apt to meet to-morrow's storms.

SIMMS. Thy fortitude unequaled clothes thee well.
(*He notices a birth mark on* NATE'S *shoulder.*)
Ha, what a mark? Am I bound by a spell?
(*He quickly denudes his own shoulder, and points out a similar mark.*)

NATE. Another mark my eyebrow hides secure.

SIMMS. And so doth mine — a wonder to be sure —

NATE. A miracle — could I my thoughts define!
Hast none of kin, thou dearest friend of mine?

SIMMS. None known to me. I had a wife and child,
Who, for a time, my lonely life beguiled.
Alas, they're dead. The raging gulf devoured
Both and myself and ship which bravely towered
For quite a time above the seething sea.
Though I was saved, life has no charms for me.

NATE (*excited*). And I was saved, locked in my mother's
arms,
Who dead, I'm told, was graced with rarest charms.
Her dress was white. Like mine her eyes and hair.

SIMMS. Thou art my boy, my long-bewaileth heir.
(*They sink into each others arms.*)

(*Curtain drops.*)

SCENE III.

(ENGLESBY'S *front room.* Mr. *and* MRS. ENGLESBY *and Maud.*)

ENGLESBY. He's raving mad. O'er cliff and crag he flew;
As if by demons chased, as one who slew
A fellow creature in an unjust cause.
His burning eyes in terror seem to pause
Whene'er they meet a partial change of view.
What doth he fear? Why cannot he subdue
This insane haste, which openly bespeaks
That quietude of mind he vainly seeks.

MRS. ENGLESBY. The hasty glance which I on him bestowed
All that and more but, oh, too plainly showed.

MAUD. He's changed far more than e'er I did expect.

ENGLESBY. Thank God, my child, he's not thy love elect.

(*Exit* MR. *and* MRS. ENGLESBY.)

MAUD (*kneeling*). Ah, thanks to thee, God of the universe!
I still am free. May now thy hand disperse
The leaden cloud which did my mind disturb;
Thine be all praise, thou didst my folly curb.

(*Enter* NATE. MAUDE *rises.*)

NATE. Ah, prayest thou? Forgive my ill-timed call.

(*He wants to withdraw, but Maud beckons him to remain.*)

MAUD. Ill-timed? Such words should ne'er from thy lips fall.

As kind as brave, thou dost not e'en resent
Past injuries — this is no compliment.

NATE (*dejected*). Naught to resent have I, and naught to hope,
Unless kind thoughts should swiftly interlope
Into thy heart, which ever seemed to lean
Away from me. No compliment, I ween?

MAUD (*smiling and blushing*). No compliment. Yet leanings ere they're fixed
Are movable, a task with sorrow mixed.

NATE (*On his knees, holding her hand. Maud drops her head and weeps*). Transfer thy love to me, if thou dost find
That worthy I of thee. Leave grief behind.
A bud, though nipped, from early frost escaped,
May bring forth fruit most sweet and perfect shaped.
Give me thy love: and thou hast given me
More than a miser in his dreams could see.
Give me thy love: let earthquakes shake this crust,
I'll cling to thee, and love thee, since I must.
Give me thy love: or I shall starve, not die;
A hopeless life doth greater woe imply.
Give me thy love: though hurricanes unfurled
Should blast our home, I still would own the world.
Give me thy love, and hardships I'll survive,
Since thee I've met, in light alone I'll thrive.
Give me thy love: and stars may rise or fall,
I'll heed it not, for thou shalt be my all.

(*Maud also sinks on her knees, and they embrace.*)

(*Curtain falls.*)

Scene IV

(Englesby's *back room.* Mr. *and* Mrs. Englesby. *Enter* Simms.)

Simms. A cheerful night. Yet cheerful thoughts arise
Not from the weather which we praise, despise,
But from the heart, from whence emotions spring,
Here giving joy, and elsewhere sickening.

Englesby. Thou speakest true. I also do perceive
No loss of late did thee of joy bereave.

Mrs. Englesby. Confess, O friend, and reap the consequence
'Twill cheer thee more and free us from suspense.

Englesby. Disclose thy heart. Truth ever speaks my spouse;
My ear is thine. My int'rest didst arouse.

Simms. Ah, how begin? The drama which deprived
Me of all joy and which but I survived,
Is known to you. Had Nate not lost his arm
Ne'er had I seen the mark which me did charm
And both of us as kinsmen doth proclaim.
My long-lost son is he. He'll grace my name.
Pride swells my aged and weary, shrunken heart,
Which, long deserted, 'neath fate's blows did smart,
For such a son as he more than fulfils
Long-buried hopes. I feel that all my ills
Are at an end. Could I embrace once more
My heart's delight, my wife, whom to adore
Was joy supreme, I'd die in rapture drowned.

(*Wiping a tear from his eye.*)

But no! O God, thy wisdom is profound,
The more thou giv'st, the more do we beseech;
The stronger we, the more we overreach
Those less endowed with weapons of defense;
The smallest gifts outweigh in consequence,
If wisely, at the proper time bestowed,
A jeweled crown, which often proves a load.

(*Enter* NATE *and* MAUD *hand in hand, unobserved.*)

ENGLESBY. Thy joy is mine; may it with us abide
Until life ebbs away. I share thy pride,
And am rejoiced that thou a kindred mind
And kindred heart didst in thy offspring find.
Had I a son like thine, I'd none begrudge.

NATE (*stepping up to* ENGLESBY, *holding* MAUD *by the hand*). Make me thy son. Thou art a lenient judge.

MAUD. O parents dear, your wilful child at last
On trusty ground hath now her anchor cast.

SIMMS. A daughter, too, and oh, much like my wife!
Enough of joy! O resurrected life!

ENGLESBY. 'Tis a surprise, yet not quite unforseen.

MRS. ENGLESBY. And well approved — your lot, be it serene.

NATE. O blessed day of joy and happiness!
A father's love I gained, a bride's caress;
All came to me, unearned, as comes the dew
From heaven, sent to nourish and renew
The vital powers of the drooping blade,
Which languishes without kind nature's aid.
The arm I lost — a parent and a bride,
The one restored, the other brought, beside

The aid it gave to end this fearful war —
Was overpaid, as offerings seldom are.

ENGLESBY. Sham modesty I deprecate. For thou,
My dearest son, hast earned all thou hast now.

SIMMS. In humbleness, far-reaching works begin;
And modest seeds have giant trees within,
Which, in their time, if guided by God's hand,
May shelter those who give not, but demand.
Unequal are the tasks which to fulfil
We're called upon; the one, whose work and skill
Doth count for ten, enacts but his own share;
The other nine, in helplessness, despair.

ENGLESBY. One of the best thou art. God heretofore
Outsingled thee, equipped thee with a store
Of virtues which from him alone could spring.
Thou didst thy part, without vain questioning.
In this short life each mortal must install,
Not for himself, but for the good of all,
His gifts of mind, his strength, and all his skill,
His task outmapped, with credit to fulfil.

(NATE *and* MAUD *kneel down.*)

Dear children, both, be clear or dark the sky,
Hope be your guide, and cheer be ever nigh.
Let rectitude and soberness of thought
All times prevail, and when life's battle's fought,
Your mental eye, calm and impassionate,
May back and forward look, and then await
Eternity's new gifts, adapted for
Each single case, and kept for all in store.
May He, who ne'er neglects His own to guard,
Your love sustain and threatening ills retard.

(*Curtain drops.*)

THE END.

THE LAST OF THE BAROTINS

A Tragedy in Two Acts

Time. The fifteenth century.
Location. A mountainous part of Bohemia.

Dramatic Personnel

Count Barotin, *of Barotin's castle.*
Elisa, *his wife.*
Jaromir, *his son.*
Bertha, *his daughter.*
Walram, *a serf and poacher.*
Anna, *his wife.*
Rollo, *his son.*
Irma, *his daughter.*
Wigrich, *a bandit chief.*
Bartholo, *a bandit.*
Serfs, robbers, Barotin's attendants and squires.

ACT I.

Scene I.

(*Courtyard of* Barotin's *castle.* Barotin, Elisa, *and their two small children playing on the steps of the veranda.*)

Barotin. Blessèd far more than the average dweller below,
For God upon me did fair boons in his kindness bestow,
Am I, who would fain be content with bounties so great,
If only those poachers their longing for mischief would sate,
Would sate and subdue, and henceforth their pilfering cease,
Which angers me daily, and robs me of comfort and peace.

ELISA. O husband, though thine, and established by usage and statute
Is the game of the forest, forebear, oh forbear! I dispute
The wisdom of overstrict measures to mitigate here
The lawless yet truly conceivable outrage. Severe
And trying the winter's great hardship, and spring now approaching
Finds empty the larder, excusing some cases of poaching.

BAROTIN. Surprised am I truly, and pained beyond thought or expression
That thou, who e'er faithful, shouldst urge me to such a concession,
Which ignorance would but construe, not as bounty, but weakness:
For, alas, man must choose 'twixt authority ever and meekness.
Neither law, nor usuage, nor pity, the throne which doth tremble
Long can uphold, unless its stays power resemble.

ELISA. But, husband, though right undisputed, thy claims all do strengthen,
Yet have I forebodings which darkly me follow, and lengthen
Their notes of dire warning whenever I chance to perceive
That thou again chafing — it saddens me sorely — I grieve.

(*Enter two servants, with* WALRAM, *the serf, bound between them.*)

FIRST ATTENDANT. We've captured this knave here, still reeking from the blood of a doe.

WALRAM (*to* BAROTIN). Have mercy, oh, mercy! Starvation, but part of our woe,
Has brought on my downfall. My wife, yet, bed-ridden and weak,
The prey of long sickness, from want to redeem I did seek.

BAROTIN. What, mercy? Thou scoundrel, thou robber, I'll teach thee, vile thief!
Mine are the forests, with all that they shelter. Each leaf

That is growing is mine, and mine all the game that abounds.
Viler art thou, and more stealthful than the basest of hounds.

WALRAM. Believe me, your honor. The doe which I slew by constraint
Ne'er suffered such want as did we. Oh, hear my complaint.

ELISA. O husband, could I but thy wrath in his favor now warp!

(*Exit* ELISA.)

BAROTIN. Vain, vain all entreaties. A punishment, searcihng and sharp,
Shall overtake him. Bring forthwith the wildest of colts.
Denude him and mount him. Ah, lightning, though fleet are thy bolts,
He'll emulate thee, while bound to his steed, which careers
When freed, through the wilds like his coveted roebucks and deer.

WALRAM (*kneeling*). Mercy, have mercy, and thine are the blessings of God.
Condemn not thy creature, who walks but a serf on thy sod,
While freedom the beasts and the birds of thy forests invites
To sate all their cravings, which bountiful nature excites.
Forgive, oh, forgive, for my fault, whether weakness or strength,
Has saved my young babes and my spouse from the fate which at length
Was nearing my threshhold, and threatened them all to destroy.
Forgive, and have mercy, and thine be the fullness of joy.

BAROTIN. Foul vulture, thy clamor, exceeded by naught but thy deeds,
Is vain, and thou'lt reap now thy self-sown and well-earned proceeds.

WALRAM. Oh, close not thine ear to my misery, which doth outcry,
O God of creation, to Thee! or surely I die.

BAROTIN. As warning example , which others will stun and dismay,
I bid thee go hence. Up, up on thy charger, away.

WALRAM (*while being undressed and lashed to the steed*). A curse upon thee, which daily shall double its sting;
Thy wife, far too noble, shall soon to earth's kind bosom cling;
Thy children shall fail thee, when nothing but them thou dost crave;
Thy life-thread shall shrivel; bereft shalt thou enter thy grave,

(*The steed rushes with its burden toward the roughest part of the forest.*)

(*Curtain drops.*)

SCENE II.

(*In a bandits' cave.* WALRAM, *bleeding and unconscious, lying on a rough bed, surrounded by robbers.*)

WIGRICH. Poor devil! I wonder which lordling this sport hath conceived;
These nobles, self-styled, by trifles are angered and grieved.
Revengeful and touchy, they fashion for others the laws,
Perfect no more than their standards, a collection of flaws,
Which they in their pride ever break. They teach us to wield
The weapons of war, the use of the sword and the shield.
Yet traitors are we, if the skill we thus gained we employ,
Not for their sole profit, who ruthless pursue and destroy,
But for ourselves, our kinsmen, and those we esteem;
That all men have rights, is a doctrine of which they ne'er dream.

BARTHOLO. Thy aim is perfection. Thy bullet sped home to reduce
To a carcass the stallion, so proud in its bearing, and spruce.

WIGRICH. The rider's grim peril induced me to hasten and act,
Whom danger from gunshot less threatened than fall and impact.

WALRAM. What, ho! Am I living? Ah Anna, my dearest, am I
With open eyes dreaming, or do my stunned senses all lie?

BARTHOLO. Thou livest. Yet stood between thee and thy celestial goal
But Wigrich's small pellet of lead; nothing else, by my soul.
Aye, small, but effective, for size doesn't count here on earth,
And quality wins, while abundance doth choke in its dearth.

WIGRICH. Misfortune binds closer, more lasting, one heart to another,
Than love between parents, or affection 'twixt brother and brother.
Misfortune, the cement, which ever tenacious adheres,
Outlasts golden shackles, and bonds in emotion's high spheres.
Worthy art thou, by fate introduced and commended,
To join our circle, since elsewhere your calling is ended.

WALRAM. I'll join thee, if hither my loved ones thou swiftly will bring,
And true thou shalt find me, till death in my grave me doth fling.

WIGRICH. Your assurance I doubt not. 'Tis natural thou shouldst be true —
But tell me, oh stranger, to whom is your hatred now due?

WALRAM (*shaking his fist*). Ah, Barotin, tyrant! A doe in his forest I slew;
My kindred were starving; their wants I did aim to subdue.

BARTHOLO. There's game in abundance, e'en more than the count can consume.
But a serf, I assure thee, doth signify little. The room
Which thou hast vacated in Barotin's ill-loved estate
Will harbor, hereafter, some beast of the wildwood to sate
Its cravings molested by none; by none ever chased
As ruthless as thou, whom death hath so nearly embraced.

WALRAM. Unquenchable loathing, oh, hate of my soul, oh, reduce
To brimstone his castle. His heart, oh, with fire infuse.

(*Curtain drops.*)

SCENE III

(*In the robbers' cave.*)

(*Enter bandits, with* ANNA *on a hand-barrow, and her two children.*)

WALRAM (*stooping over his wife*). Oh, blessèd my eyes. My vengeful and petrified breast
For once is relaxed, for love has been e'er thy behest.

(*Kisses her.*)

My wife, thou art gentle; thy presence doth sooth and allay
The demons which fiercely me tortured, whom now I would slay.
For thee I'd relinquish all thoughts retributive and sore,
And overcome bias and hardship. All this, and far more.

ANNA. Have thanks, my good Walram. Though lowly, we ever agreed.
Yet am I a burden, unhelpful, and ever in need.

WALRAM. A stay, not a burden. O dearest, thy fortitude ever
Was ample for two, and I found it a trustworthy lever
To raise and dislodge the darkest of threatening evils
Which openly gnawed, or in stealth, like the core-killing weevils.

ANNA. Alas, my dear Walram, I'd gladly with thee yet abide,
But I feel I am dying, like the foam in the wake of the tide.

BARTHOLO (*aside to* WALRAM). I fear her forebodings are founded. She had a relapse
When your plight was reported, a cause quite sufficient, perhaps.

WALRAM (*in agony and surprise*). Oh no, my own Anna, not, dying! O God, help thou me!
O dearest, thou'lt rally, and ever as heretofore be

My beacon in darkness, and when the fierce rays of the sun
Me sear and delude, thou wilt, as thou often hast done,
Ennoble thy station, as guardian angel serene;
Our children confiding upon thee in safety shall lean.

ANNA. Thy words kindest Walram, would cheer me, if cheer could find room
In a heart which is smothered, foreseeing its loved one's sad gloom.
Alas, this life's burdens, compared with the light of beyond,
Were scarcely inviting, without the soul-warming love-bond.
Yet since I enjoyed my full measure of earth born indulgence,
Why should I now falter while nearing God's realm of effulgence?
Couldst thou and our babes in this journey me follow, attend,
How lightly I'd sever all ties, which still I would mend.

WALRAM (*laying both babes against her breast. She fondles them*). O God, had I known that so soon we must part in death's shade,
More kind and more patient I'd been, and more slow to evade
The small daily tokens of service, which open proclaim
The love and affection which ever my heart did inflame.

ANNA. (*in a low, weak voice*). Oh, cease, my kind husband. Oh, torture no longer thy mind;
Thou wert ever faithful and gen'rous, and kinder than kind.
Farewell, my sweet babes, may God be your stay and your guide;
Farewell, thou best Walram, my husband, my lover, my pride.

(*She dies.*)

WALRAM. Dead, dead! Oh, delusion, for once I would welcome thy shroud!
Bring forth thy contrivance. Proclaim, ah, proclaim it aloud,
That yet she is living, she of myself the best part.
Delude me to gain but a moment; ply speedy thy art,

Which, though it would vainly endeavor a fact to undo,
Would quench for a moment the woe which is piercing me through.

WIGRICH. Alas, my poor fellow! Death's whims are the whims of the storm,
Which here smites a giant, and elsewhere doth skip a weak form.
His whims are the whims which distinguish the lightning's fell stroke,
Here trifling and toying, while yonder it splinters an oak.

WALRAM (*raising his right hand on high*). Or the whims of that devil who murdered my consort so kind,
While petting his hounds, who their teeth upon human bones grind.
My better self left me, and what there of me doth remain,
In the service of vengeance shall prosper, or die in disdain.
Woe, woe, and despair! be, Barotin, ever thy share.
The serpent of conscience shall sting thee, and find a fit lair
In thy blackest of hearts, and its coils shall its dwelling embrace
With the force of a mountain; its pressure shall blanch thy bold face.
Destruction, thy demon, whom thou dost so often employ,
Shall wait upon thee, thy joys to debase and alloy.
Thy whole race shall perish, like leaves by a hurricane blasted;
Thy life-ship shall founder, and be in its prime all unmasted.
Thy first-born shall vanish, returning to thee as a scourge,
And thou shalt be swallowed in thy self-created dread surge.

(*Curtain drops.*)

SCENE IV.

(*Main hall of* BAROTIN *castle.*)

ELISA (*exhausted and weeping, drops on a chair*). O Jaromir, darling, thou canst not be lost yet, Oh, never.
I've vainly been searching, but find not my fondling so clever.

(*Enter* BAROTIN, *also exhausted.*)

BAROTIN. Alas, what misfortune! The child must be stolen or drowned.
My people for days now are seeking, but never have found
The slightest of traces. The river we also have dragged,
But useless all labor. I'm weary, and tired, and fagged.

(*Sits down aud covers his face with his hands.*)

ELISA. Thou offspring of Heaven, O Hope! forsake thou me not.
Benumbed are my feelings, by sorrow and weeping begot.

BAROTIN. Despair not, Elisa, I'll rest not until he is found;
Each nook in the realm I'll examine, all brooklets I'll sound.
One seeking for pleasure, doth shun in his search the extreme,
Avoiding abysses, and falters where highest peaks gleam.
But he who has motives, whose aim is the truth to reveal,
Avoids the broad highway, which only to ease doth appeal.

ELISA. The curse of poor Walram, whom thou didst so ruthlessly damn,
Is haunting me ever and poisons my heart like a dram.

BAROTIN. My thoughts have found also the foolish and treacherous dolt.
But sure he is harmless, received, as he has, his last jolt.

ELISA. What sayeth his consort? Is she yet within her abode?
O husband, she's helpless. Pray ease thou her direful load.

BAROTIN. A neighbor informed me that she for a brother hath sent,
Who dwelleth remotely, with whom to remain's her intent.

ELISA. Alas, I am grieved. I hoped in her sorrow to share,
Her woe to allay by adding to hers my own care.
Heartache and grief all barriers break in an hour,
Which pride hath upbuilded, revealing the weakness of power.

(*Exit* ELISA.)

BAROTIN. The weakness of power — prophetic her words are,
and true.
Walram, ah, Walram, my powers, I'll pledge them to you
If thou wilt now cancel thy involuntary sojourn,
If thou from the land of the shadows wilt forthwith return,
My weakness to strengthen, to teach me what fain I would learn.
O Jaromir, darling! Did truly his curses I earn?
The boulder I started a-rolling has crushed in its run
My ill-guided serf, and my innocent, ill-starrèd son.
Its track of destruction, which threatens my joys all to sear,
Is hitherward leading, encumb'ring my mind with grave fear.
An evil to smother, we give to the furies full sway,
Who turn, when unfettered, their own liberator to slay.

(*Curtain drops.*)

ACT II

SCENE I

(*Time, eighteen years after first act.*)

WALRAM (*alone in the bandits' cave*). At last the time's coming
to settle a long-pending doom.
I, who have the key to the secret, who tended the loom
Which Barotin's fate has been weaving, impartial I'll stand.
Hereafter, unbidden, I'll raise neither weapon nor hand.
If my inclinations were such, I could now attack
The ruin impending, or smite him within his own track.
The spirits of vengeance not vainly were challenged by him;
Nor will I appease them, nor are they e'er swayed by a whim.
His wife and my Anna, both innocent, kindly, and true,
Have fallen as victims. Let him his declining days rue.
His son, now a bandit, our chieftain since Wigrich's demise,
Shall choose between Bertha, and her whom as daughter I prize.

(*Noise without. Enter* JAROMIR *and* BARTHOLO.)

BARTHOLO. A unique adventure, O Walram, hast surely thou missed:
Disguised as two beggars, compassion we tried to enlist
At Barotin's castle. The count, who looked tired and aged,
Paid us no attention, but Bertha all ailings assuaged.

(*Exit* BARTHOLO.)

JAROMIR. Truthful, Bartholo correctly described the affair.
The count, ever hated sincerely by us, in his lair
I longed to encounter, since never we met heretofore.
Forbidding in aspect, his features, which proudly he bore,
My sympathy challenged, the wherefore still to me obscure.
His daughter's a maiden of charms, which might princes allure.

WALRAM. And, bandits, I dare to maintain. But Jaromir, boy,
Thy wits I pray quicken, let not what I say thee annoy.
A foundling, whom once I adopted, art Jaromir, thou.
No kinship or tie of the blood did e'er, I avow,
Us link to each other; two children have I and no more.
Still art thou a kin of my spirit, which I not deplore.

JAROMIR. Pained much and surprised, doth find your disclosure me now.
Who am I? Whence from did I happen? Of what stem a bough?

WALRAM. "Who am I?" A question by me oft inquiringly asked!
A bandit, I answer. But truth e'er by seeming is masked.
Are not all men bandits? Why call not thyself then a man?
E'er banded together, the mighty their robberies plan.
The priesthood, less daring, but strongly towards power inclined
In bands doth assemble, the sheep to the shepherds to bind.
Some authors are bandits, who evermore pilfer and steal;
While others, perfecting, new beauties of structure reveal.

The beggar's a bandit, for all that he has, is acquired.
By stolen wealth aided, great things have been done and admired.
Thy next puzzling query, "whence from" have quite often I met;
Yet vainly I've pondered and struggled in reason's deep net.
From the earth all doth issue, which to earth in its course can return.
But the soul which enlivens, which judges, doth earthly rules spurn.
"Whence from" is the query which greatest minds stuns in its weight.
And "whither" the echo which doctrines and doubtings create.
Yet, since thou art eager to learn more than I can disclose,
I'll answer at random, a stray shot oft near the mark goes:
Thou'rt sent on thy journey by God, who again thee will claim;
While matter claims matter; each going from whence it first came.
And thirdly, thou seekest the stem to discover, whose bough
Thy green youth resembles. Most gladly I'd answer, but how?
Like mine, thy ancestors from Adam are said to descend,
And your and my blood with Noah's, they tell us, did blend.

JAROMIR. Lame are thy instructions, applying to all men who live,
Oh, mock not my yearning. Give me information, pray give!

WALRAM. Said I not, a foundling? And foundlings I feel we are all.
I knew once my parents, at least, that is what they did call
Themselves, me embracing. The chances are, they the truth told.
But proof quite convincing, I never, not once, did behold.
Are we not all foundlings? More helpless than kittens quite blind,
At the start of life's journey, our nurses us ever do find.
The ties in blood founded, dull creatures do ever hold dear,
But intellect's, soaring, seek kindred within their high sphere.
'Tis all I can tell thee. I found thee a child in yon hills.
Why seek for the hidden, while sunshine thy present state fills?

Why cast forth thy lantern, encumb'ring thy haste towards the light,
When doubtful of finding aught else but a still darker night?

JAROMIR. Philosopher's wisdom may satisfy sages, whose heart
Has conquered all passions; but mine did no conquest yet start.

WALRAM. Aye, passions and heart? Well might I have known and divined
That thou, like all others, 'neath cupid's restrictions hast pined.
The heart is the main-spring which man ever onward propels;
The heart is as deep as the ocean, which billows and swells
In secrets unfathomed, surprising not seldom itself;
The heart is the playground, preferrèd by goblin and elf.
The heart, uncorrupted, will gropingly find the best way,
While the mind, preconceited by eager ambition, may stray.
The heart is a war-field, where passions in combat decide
Which shall be the chief of the moment, supreme in his pride;
Where hate and where envy with rivals more gentle contend;
Where virtue its champions 'gainst darker intruders doth send.
The heart is the touchstone to which in the end we appeal
When mind is despairing, unable the truth to reveal.

JAROMIR. Thy words are well chosen, but words, like the foam of the sea,
No vessel can carry, nor are they of value to me.
Words are like a chaff-heap, with which the wind gambols and plays,
And deeds like the kernel, which, by its weight, value betrays.
Chaff ever is welcome if coupled with grain it is found;
Give deeds me alone, or give me the proper compound.

WALRAM. The proper compound for the chilled is a well-heated punch;
For the starving, a luncheon, or something co-equal to munch;

For the poor, a purse swelling; for the warrior, dissention and strife;
For thee, ah, my lad, I imagine it's naught but a wife.
And since thou dost hanker for a proper and wholesome compound,
How doth my child please thee? She's handsome and hearty and sound.
But shouldst thou have chosen, before this, some other trim maid,
My means shall attend thee, nor shalt thou despair of my aid.

JAROMIR. What, Irma? My sister? But no, she is not of my kin.
But dear and belovèd as were she my sister and twin.
Habit, ah, habit. In leisure thy fabrics are wrought,
Slowly proceeding, thou weavest with zeal and forethought,
A home for the future, enslaving the soil of thy growth
Which, by thee corrupted, thy presence to curtail is loth.
Thou flatter'st thy victim, who soothes by thy aid his desire,
Who swallows thy potions, although they're consuming like fire.
'Tis a habit which taught me to look upon Irma with eyes
Which are but a brother's; and use, innovation denies.
Alas, my thoughts ramble far over yon hills, and are sad,
'Tis Barotin's daughter. I love her! I'm dizzy! I'm mad!

WALRAM. Mad, mad, who is mad? There are those who as madness define
Each venture of daring, accomplished not by the supine,
But by the exertions of those who all doubtings adjourned,
And, crowned by achievement, their madness to wisdom is turned.
There is madness e'er rampant, which wins not through merit or worth
But, pampered by fortune, it gains all it claims here on earth.
Madness and wisdom as, seen by the world, are the same,
But popular favor and circumstance change e'er the name.

Ne'er call the day wasted, ere the shade of the night doth advance,
Nor revel in triumph, while still old Sol's charger doth prance.
Though in the dim light, which man in his judgement doth guide,
Thou art far beneath thy cherished, but vainly sought bride.
Yet, were each one stationed as justice and right doth dictate,
The world, now a madhouse, were altered, but clamor and hate
Would rage even fiercer, for worthy and generous souls
Will bear much injustice, while egotists passion controls.
Rank and high station, like dress, may embellish or hide
The good or the evil, for seeming doth ever misguide.

JAROMIR. Canst thou, then, perceive a chance of success in my case?
Alas, if thou'rt hopeful, I'm eager thy views to embrace.

WALRAM. 'Tis easily done. When Barotin hunts with his child,
I'll fall upon them, in a part of the forest most wild,
With half of thy men, and thou to the rescue must fly
In garb of a knight, thus gaining by well-devised lie
All that which truth vainly would strive for or seek to obtain;
For seeming doth conquer where truth ne'er a foothold could gain.
The life man is leading is masked by the shallowest art,
Deceiving each other, each hoping his fellow to thwart.
Unconscious that seeming confronts us at every hour,
We hope, undetected, to rise in esteem and in power.

(*Curtain falls.*)

SCENE II

(BAROTIN *and* BERTHA, *hunting in the forest on horseback.*)

BAROTIN. My squires have vanished; the baying of hounds doth betray
That we in the heat of the chase have strayed far away

From the track of the deer. Yet did I a rustling perceive,
Alluring us hither, but vainly we strayed, I believe.

BERTHA. I scarcely regret it, if slaughter to witness I'm spared;
The quiet of nature is heaven, with killing compared!

BAROTIN. Thou art like thy mother, and am I right glad that thou art;
But killing is needful, of ev'ry man's duty a part.
The minnow is relished by the greedy and sharp-toothed pike;
The dove is the prey that the falcon unerring doth strike;
And the eagle swoops down, destroying the latter by force,
Proclaiming his power in deeds which we fully endorse.
And mankind is ruled by the fearless, whose ev'ryday sport
Is killing of those who refuse their decrees to support.
"Kill or be killed?" is the question confronting each being;
Destruction all threatens, from which all that liveth is fleeing.
The beast's faultless instinct doth teach it to strike a fell blow,
If armed for the combat; if not in swift flight to forego
The fate of the weaker, who elsewhere the stronger may prove,
Thus giving man lessons, which to follow, it doth him behoove.

(WALRAM, *disguised, springs from behind a huge boulder with a weighted net, which he throws over* BAROTIN, *pulling him to the ground, and holding him down with his foot. Other robbers surround* BERTHA *and the horses.*)

WALRAM. Thou high priest of killing, thy sermon hath taught me thy creed;
Presumption thy mainstay, shall totter, I'll warrant, in speed.
Thy doctrine of slaughter which thou did'st to others apply
Shall prove thy undoing. The fates, shall each other out-vie
Thy footsteps to follow, e'er turning thy spleen-poisoned dart
From the heart of thy victim to thee, who so modest now art.

BERTHA. Help! Help! Oh, have mercy! My father I pray
you to spare.
A ransom most princely I promise. Oh, spare him, have care.

(JAROMIR *in guise of a knight comes riding through the woods, followed by a dozen of heavily armed riders. They attack the bandits, who flee, after a short but fierce fight.*)

JAROMIR (*after helping* BAROTIN *on his horse*). O Chance!
Thy kind service, to thanks everlasting me binds,
For guiding me hither. Thy cunning the means ever finds
To vanquish the likely, the probable, which in this case
With hardships thee threatened, had I not arrived here apace.

BAROTIN. Be it chance or a wonder created us both to defend,
My thanks shall attend thee, and never their potency spend.

JAROMIR. Chance overthrows reason, if such with its whims
doth agree.
Its fickle impulses none ever could trace or foresee.
Chance often accomplished in moments a deed to surprise
The centuries toiling unfruitful, with wide-open eyes.
And chance oft destroyed in a moment the harvest and fruit
Which busy hands gathered in years of content or dispute.

BERTHA. The virtue of chance which brought us your timely
relief,
Thou didst vindicate in a manner conclusive and brief.
Its less-pleasing features, to Heaven, I pray, may remain
Hidden forever. Let thanks be our heartfelt refrain.

BAROTIN. These bandits shall suffer. I'll follow them up to
their den,
Which far o'er the mountains, I doubt not, I'll find with my men.
I'll chase the vile skulkers who dare in my realm me to brave,
Until they are routed, unable their bare life to save.

JAROMIR. By silence I'd teach them that to the weak ne'er the strong bows,
Who the shafts of ill-humor, unnoticed, to pass by allows,
When envy and hatred the mean-hearted rabble enrage,
Whose impotence crawling, would fain in their own dingy cage
Of spirit-endeavor, entomb the high-soaring, whose heart,
Disowning the paltry, their richness to others impart.
I'd pass them unnoticed, and leave to the fate of the weak,
These sneaking marauders who thus for a livelihood seek.
For, who in the mire dispensers of God-given treats
Would gladly engulf is worse than these robbers and cheats.

BERTHA. Thou art a defender, first saving us in our plight,
Thy noble soul turneth to set these poor outlaws aright,
Who, though they are guilty, more courage and manhood display
Than a babbling cit, whose tongue is his organ of sway.

BAROTIN. Thy aid do I value, nor lightly thy speech I despise;
But authority's claim, private inclinations denies,
Which would but encounter the sterner, yet needful decrees
By wisdom and power enacted, as mankind it sees.

JAROMIR. Ah, power is potent, and fashions its laws in behalf
Of its own desire, which ne'er overmodest, doth laugh
At the rights of the weaker, who nature's laws rather would choose
Than laws of man's making, which justice not seldom abuse;
And choice is but given to few, while the many despair,
Some hopeless submitting, some taking by force their own share.
But why am I preaching, I, who am inclined e'er to sate
By violence aided, all that which my yearnings dictate?
The error each nurses, is in his own conscience to place
An idol for worship called self, of small virtue or grace.

BERTHA. Errors detected cease instantly errors to be,
If we, the deluded, refuse not the blemish to see.
Correct diagnosis, first of all else doth insure
A check of the evil, if not a reform or a cure.

BAROTIN. Wend, stranger, thy way, and follow me to my abode,
Where we may discuss more fully this late episode.

BERTHA. My father's request, I pray thee to heed and comply,
For just debts to cancel, none e'er should forget or deny.

JAROMIR. My spirit shall follow, its rambles not bound by confines,
But the shell where it dwelleth, more cumbrous, reluctant, declines.
For unlike the former, whose movements outspeed the sun's rays,
The latter appointments must keep on its slow-winding ways.
Yet shall I, when duties, time hallowed, are paid and discharged,
Seek new ones near beauty and kindness, with vision enlarged.

(*They salute and part in different directions.*)

(*Curtain drops.*)

SCENE III

(*In the park of Barotin Castle. In the background is seen a crypt, with an old weatherbeaten brick garden-house over the entrance of the crypt.*

JAROMIR (*standing*). BERTHA (*seated on a bench under some shade trees.*)

JAROMIR. Kind maid, I behold thee, and joyful my heart doth vibrate.
My eyes by dull abstinence famished, their yearnings would sate.
My thoughts since we parted, evading mind's guiding control,
Have been in attendance on thee, while I, like a mole,
'Gainst distance have struggled, but slowly reducing the space
Which kept me from viewing thy loveliness and thy mind's grace.

BERTHA. My parent's kind welcome, joined by my most grateful regard,
Is thine, and the doors of the castle thou'lt find e'er unbarred.

JAROMIR. O Bertha, thou dearest of all which the sun doth behold,
Forgive my presumption, and pardon intrusions so bold.
The world is a desert, where joys are but scanty and rare;
Where, for each oasis, there's ever an ocean of care;
Where promise confounds us, by giving us rapture to-day
O'er hopes which the future is loth, or unable, to pay.
Since my eyes encountered the orbs which thy countenance grace,
I've divined all the transports, for which only heaven's the place.
My life lacks the keystone, to make it complete in its way;
My heart, by doubt tortured, is faint, and a slave to dismay.
To thee my soul turneth, perceiving the richness in all
Which sorely I'm wanting, which fain I my treasures would call.
Thou art my hope's beacon, to guide me from threat'ning abyss;
Thy voice is the echo of angels, thy presence is bliss.
To see thee is living, to miss thee is anguish supreme,
To love and possess thee, the climax of heaven doth seem.

BERTHA. Oh speak thou not thus, frail am I, and prone to believe
Impossible tidings, which me of all peace may bereave.

JAROMIR. Alas, could devotion, could penance my unworthy past
Efface, ere its knowledge o'erwhelms thee with horrors aghast;
Yet truth often shaded, when minor affairs are at stake
Should shine in full splendor when crises the heart overtake.
Deceive thee, I cannot, deception its countenance hides
Where virtue's pure blossom with modesty dwells and abides.
Forgive me truth's torture; plain spoken, and seemingly rude,
Yet pain thus engendered doth agents of healing include.
The chief of the bandits, whose force in the forest misled
Thyself and thy parent am I. O God, were I dead! (*Covers his face with his hands.*)

BERTHA. I'm stunned o'er thy ravings, yet surely thou'rt noble and good.
Oh, shield us, ye fates, belovèd, feared sisterhood!

(*Enter* BAROTIN *with armed men.*)

FIRST ATTENDANT. There, count, stands the robber, whose brazen front to me is known,
Who knighthood is shamming, shall forthwith be quite overthrown.

BAROTIN. Thou hear'st thy accuser; speak, speak, and the truth be thy guide,
Nor try to dissemble, for justice will swiftly decide.

(BERTHA *runs to the garden-house; and* JAROMIR *follows her, bolting the door on the inside. The ghost of* ELISA, *standing in the vault door, beckons them, and they follow her into the vault, also bolting the door.* BAROTIN'S *men try to break open the garden-house door, and failing in this, they mount to its roof with ladders, trying to break in. Suddenly the whole structure collapses with a crash.*)

(*Curtain drops.*)

SCENE IV

(*In* BAROTIN'S *private room. Noises heard from without, caused by the removal of the garden-house ruins.*)

BAROTIN (*in a large armchair, moaning*). O most bitter fate!
Relentless, thy rancor doth waste
Each joy in my keeping; each fortune which ever me faced,
Thy hatred did smother, e'er leaving but embers behind
Which me — now forsaken — with former-time images blind.
Life's high-blazing fires and promising prospects will fail,
And the more we possess, the more will we lose and bewail.
He is the true ruler, who want's and necessity's cries
Unuttered restrains, and short-lived enjoyments denies.

He is the true monarch, who, dying, behind him doth leave
Joy-giving treasures of thought, or deeds which retrieve
The errors of folly, so common, yet seldom discerned;
Or he, who, like Jesus, by kindness to conquer hath learned.
Alas, my great sorrow, increased by the thought of my sins,
Doth vainly seek comfort, for comfort and virtue are twins.
O Walram! Whom pitiless anger did hunt unto death,
Fulfilled are the curses which, couched in thy own dying breath,
From heaven were hurled, my conscience to smite and dismay,
And humbled I totter, the debts of the ruthless to pay.

(*Enter attendant with letter.* BAROTIN *reads.*)

" Not from the grave's quiet, doth Walram's faint voice now arise,
But rescued from danger, and living. My words shall surprise,
O Barotin, thee. Thy only son liveth, whom I,
Thus sating my vengeance, abducted to punish and try
Thy proud evil temper, which blasted my life, and destroyed
My poor wife's existence, who never thy pleasure annoyed.
To wreck thee by inches, to cut off the joys and the needs,
Upon which man's nature, unconscious, the hungry heart feeds..
To send all before thee, which caused thee this life to endure,
I've planned and have plotted. Alas, now in doubt, to abjure
My office of judgment, which lowers my human estate;
For torturing others degrades us to servants or hate.
By dimming thy pleasure, by less'ning the cheer of thy hours,
I wrong and abuse my own manhood and waste my own powers,
Which now misdirected, in unworthy channels must move;
Which, freed from this trammel, a source of my solace may prove
When all earthly passions, like leaves in the autumn must fall,
And of seeming denuded, reality comes to appall
My staggering spirit which — pity me — is thy soul's mate
In all that is selfish, and all that doth suff'ring create.
Thy son, though an outlaw, who, saved thee from other men's crime
Is noble, and worthy thy station to fill in his time."

(*He drops the letter with a groan.*)

Too late came this message. My children are smothered and killed,
And my heart, filled with sorrow, despairing, and hopeless and chilled.
"Too late," ah, "too late," two words of deep meaning, which stun
The mind of the wisest, who seeing, yet blindly doth run
To chase his own phantoms which never his yearnings can sate.
When, alas, he is sobered, by the two little words of "too late."

(*He dies.*)

(*Curtain drops.*)

Scene V

Elisa (*stooping over the body of* Bertha, *who dropped dead when the garden-house collapsed*). I mourn and rejoice.
For thou art my long-missing son:
I mourn thy sad fortune, which endeth thy love scarce begun;
Which breaks thy ambitions, and strikes with the furies' own ire
Thy innocent heart, for the sins of thy ill-guided sire.
I mourn thy joys plighted, before they could bloom and mature,
And well-deserved pleasures in virtuous struggles secure.
I rejoice that thy sister has joined me where passions no more
Her pure soul can tarnish, where pain never reaches the core;
And that the temptation that threatened ye both to disgrace
God thus hath defeated, Who ye in my keeping did place.
Thou, child of affliction, all trials, most searching and stern,
Are a hoard for the future, and a school where each mortal must learn,
For, occurrences fleeting are joys when contrasted with pain,
But cease to have virtue, when toilless our options we gain.

Jaromir. Art thou then my mother, the countess for whom many mourned,
Who ever her station with womanly graces adorned?

ELISA. Thy mother's own spirit, who living, thy loss did bewail;
Who dead, found no solace since restless I followed your trail,
Which finally ended, and undisturbed rest and repose
Shall henceforth unceasingly bless me, who for thy sake rose;
For thou, like a fledgling, who of his own mother bereaved,
Wert hapless and helpless — and oh, how my yearning heart grieved.
The grief of a cycle, compressed in the space of an hour
Doth age prematurely its victims, with heart-searching power.

JAROMIR. The woe of a lifetime, this hour has brought upon me,
And all which hereafter may happen, indifferent shall be.
Let tempests engulf me, let fiercely new woes me assail;
Let sunbeams shed splendor around me, or fortune prevail;
Unmoved I'll encounter whatever the future me sends,
And meet with due meekness all troubles which spiteful fate lends.
I'm stunned and distracted, my leaden heart sinks with a moan,
And dullest indifference accepts all that comes as its own.
The joy or the sorrow which reigneth supreme in our soul
Doth lesser emotions o'ershadow, and ever control.

ELISA. O son of my bosom, belovèd and highly prized child,
Despair not; a lifetime, though cheerless, is swiftly beguiled.
The span of thy suff'ring, with eternity's promise compared,
Is like a small candle which vainly in daylight hath flared,
Which passes unnoticed, too paltry thy future to warp —
Thy future which loometh God seeking where critics ne'er carp;
Where doubt, ever fainter assails thee, foreseeing its doom;
Where darkness, vacating its lodgings, for brightness makes room.
Our suffering advances and quickens us while we progress,
While ease, ever lagging, doth emptiness love and caress.

JAROMIR. Henceforth my mind's feelers shall skip over joys which they meet,
And pain shall seek vainly to frighten me into retreat.

The home of my fathers, the Barotin's vested estates
May fall into ruins, for nature my dwindling wants sates,
With those of all creatures who willingly with me do share;
Not heir of a castle, but of the whole world a co-heir.

ELISA. Go hence, my loved darling, thy coming days spend in retreat,
Where mankind avoids thee, and listen to nature's pulse-beat,
Which will interpret, in visible tokens or sounds
God's fathomless wisdom, which in every atom abounds.
Thy eye is a measure, will comprehend Him who gave sight
And the voices are His, which ever thy eager ears smite.
Pray thou for thy brothers, who ever by seeming conclude;
Who, deceiving each other, hope God like themselves to delude;
And, seeking vain pleasures, are dulling their intellect's eye,
Which trained but to trifle, is unfit the truth to descry.
And pray for thy kindred. Oh, pray, my son, ceaseless for all
Who have contributed to bring about Barotin's fall.
When enemies threaten, we truly may hope to survive,
But our own vices us ever of safety deprive.

(JAROMIR *bends over his sister to caress her. Embracing his mother's ghost, he leaves the vault by a secret passage into the forest.*)

(*Curtain drops.*)

SCENE VI.

JAROMIR (*alone in a mountain chasm*). All delusions have vanished, the dotard's experience is mine,
The future's face hidden seems nearer while things do decline,
Pertaining the transient, whose destiny is to fulfil
The wants of the moment, which vainly man aimeth to still;
When past hopes are blasted, we draw on the future to feed
The mind's e'er increasing desire, and the soul's yearning need.

(*Moaning is heard.* JAROMIR *passes around a large rock which should occupy the center of the stage. He finds* WALRAM *half conscious, with his eyes pecked out by the vultures which circle above. He takes his flask, gives him a drink and washes his face.*)

JAROMIR. O fateful misfortune! O Walram, most deeply injured
Hast thou me in blindness of spirit, when thou hast allured
Me from the true bosom which motherhood's faultless instincts
Have holied forever. I mourn not the loss of precincts
Wherein I, as ruler, could follow my sire's proud reign,
But grieve for the mother whom thou hast so wantonly slain.

WALRAM. My blindness of spirit, alas, has borne fruit of its kind.
My spirit, now seeing, has left my poor body stone-blind.

JAROMIR. Could, Walram, my pity thy eyesight again now restore,
Thou'd suffer no longer. I love thee to-day as of yore.

(*Kneels and prays.*)

O God, thou hast mercy, Oh, strengthen his heart and forgive,
For blind are thy creatures, not seeing the true way to live.
Thou amply providest the needful, each in his own turn,
Yet blindly and stubborn the gifts of thy choosing we spurn,
But eagerly gather, what wisdom would scorn and refuse;
And, groping in darkness, we make but indifferent use
Of all the great treasures which Thou dost in kindness dispense;
O Lord, give us insight to fathom our own impotence.

(*To* WALRAM.)

Thy hurt is most grievous. Oh, tell me the cause of it all?
Misfortune's grim talons aim ever our hopes to forestall.
Misfortune calls on us when least we expect her approach,
And woe is her handmaid, who comes with her in the same coach.

WALRAM. Thy father's bold squires dispersed our band in fierce haste,
And I, seeking shelter, sped hither, relentlessly chased;
A rubblestone tripped me, and, losing my balance, I fell
In this chasm of darkness — 'tis all I am able to tell.

JAROMIR. And what of thy children? O brother, O sister of mine!
Have they also perished? Doth all with the dread fates combine?

WALRAM. From hence have I sent them, a new life to start in new lines,
And I was to follow, yet tarried, for habit builds shrines
Which hold us in bondage, which draw us e'er back to the spot
Where joys made us merry, or sorrows, not easy forgot
Have marked as with milestones, the heart of each pilgrim, which sways
'Twixt the gifts of the moment and by-gone, but fate-laden, days.

JAROMIR. Aye, days of sore trials, of far-and deep-reaching import,
Have us overtaken like tempests, which roaming for sport,
Break down the wood's giant, which ever unbending doth reign
O'er the sapling which, stooping in danger, doth safety attain.
Thy eyesight, which vanished, let me in a measure supply,
And be thou my solace when lonely my heart doth outcry.
For all which e'er cheered me has faded and left me; but pain,
Which once I avoided, appears now, though sadd'ning, as gain.
Gain is each emotion which sobers and chastens the mind;
Intuitious forerunner is suff'ring, e'er leaving behind
The dross of vainglory, the baseless, yet pleasing conceit
That we, of God's creatures alone, may the menace defeat
Which utter destruction doth brandish, and which we by rote,
Ape-like repeating, ne'er doubting, do ceaselessly quote.

WALRAM. Alas, I have wronged thee, yet love thee e'en more than my own,
And hoped to repay thee, and that thou my sins wouldst condone.
Yet man, ever planning, gropes vainly the right way to find,
And should he e'er reach it, he finds himself hopeless behind.

JAROMIR. Grieve not, O Walram, 'tis human to err and unbend;
Most lives are deep riddles which unsolved by men ever end.
Yet, failure apparent may failure not be in God's sight,
And earth-born conclusions may prove but the dream of a night.

(*Jaramir carries blind* WALRAM *from the scene.*)

(*Curtain drops.*)

THE END.

MY OWN PHILOSOPHY

Part One

Thou askest, brother dearest,
That I my views divulge
Of all in which the merest
And plainest men indulge;
Of God, of truth, professions,
Of men, the soul and mind,
Of love, and such expressions
I in your queries find.

Alas, the task propounded
The foremost minds did vex,
And some of them have founded
Odd schools, us to perplex.
Since men have lived and striven,
The wisest in their time
Have asked, and answers given,
All more or less sublime.

We seek the good, the better,
And something better still;
The best to find and fetter,
How great be our skill;
We dare not hope, well knowing
That what we build to last
May like the wind that's blowing,
Have vanished soon, and passed.

We strive for strong foundations;
  We search, and sift, and probe;
And yet, the fate of nations,
  The life of a microbe,
Are equally a riddle,
  Which we explain, not solve;
And what we call the middle,
  May on the edge revolve.

We know not the full features,
  And needs must underrate
The force which we, His creatures,
  As "God" do designate.
The more us insight blesses,
  The higher we do stand,
The vaster He impresses
  Us in his footprints grand.

And God grows in proportion
  With our strengthening mind;
Or rather, our distortion
  Of Him, we changèd find.
And though we are approaching,
  The distance greater seems,
When error's hosts, encroaching,
  Have yielded to light's beams.

The nearer that we travel,
  The more of God we learn;
The more he doth unravel
  What fain we would discern;
The more us growth enables
  To see the final doom
Of all the ancient fables,
  The higher God doth loom.

The true, the pure, and kindly,
  Find in their worth their shield;
To them who ever blindly
  To base impulses yield,
God seems a stern corrector
  Whose aim is to destroy;
Alas! Their soul's reflector,
  Shows them their own alloy.

The trinity of matter,
  Of spirit and of God,
(Forgive, if I should shatter
  Your leanings, roughly shod)
Ne'er did begin, nor ever
  Can end and cease to be;
'Tis vain to try and sever
  Them from eternity.

The human insight pauses
  And falters in its awe,
When seeking for the causes,
  The universal law.
Yet, aided by our senses —
  Alas, but far too few —
We glean, and inferences
  Us with new hopes imbue.

We note that hidden forces
  All things lead and propel,
That stars keep in their courses,
  And tides subside or swell;
In our mind's recesses,
  In our heart's retreat,
A power stirs, impresses
  Us with its potent beat.

'Tis God, inseparable
From matter and from mind,
Who weaves and spins the cable
Which them together bind.
'Tis He, whose guiding reason
Doth lead all things aright,
And who, at every season,
Provides a new delight.

God, if by us offended,
Not wishing to estrange,
Leaves us to grope, attended
By darkness, in doubt's range,
Where we find solace never,
Where we bereft of joy,
In stubbornness endeavor
To cling to base alloy.

We thus, progress retarding,
Receive the dues of sin
Which we, God's aid discarding,
Invited to come in.
Though indirect, unfailing,
The punishment us finds;
Still, God in all prevailing,
Us of his love reminds.

God gave each being powers
With which to work and strive,
To fill the speeding hours,
As doth the bee her hive;
The wise, to aid his fellow,
Unselfish at all times;
The jesting clown to mellow
Life's sternness with his chimes.

The reptile, he provided
With weapons of defense;
The fox, by cunning guided,
Feels his own consequence.
Variety exceeding
Our fancy's boldest thought,
Everywhere is breeding
New forms in splendor wrought.

God all these things created,
Not solely for mankind,
For grasping man, ne'er sated
Is helpless, weak, and blind,
Without the hand which blesses
Not less the lily's days,
Whose modest charm impresses
Man in his selfish ways.

Events we see a-passing
But know not their import;
We see odd signs amassing,
Which former views distort;
A genius inspired,
Doth solve at last it all,
And error, custom-sired,
Doth from its socle fall.

The tenets which we guarded,
Defended, and e'er praised,
At last we have discarded
And truer dogmas raised;
Yet, who will say these changes
Are final and to stay?
Man, erring man, arranges,
But all his works decay.

The truth alone is lasting,
And God, in doses small,
New pathways ever blasting,
Divulges them for all.
"Give us," we are demanding,
"The truth for which we pine!"
But it is understanding
We need, and help divine.

For truths are crowding ever
Upon us everywhere;
But few possess the lever
With which delusion's snare
Is to be pried and sundered
From objects we survey;
And all of us have blundered,
And blunder every day.

The truth, the truth entire
To know, none e'er may hope.
God, who doth all inspire
Made man to search and grope;
Yet nearer, ever nearer
Towards him each being draws,
Towards understanding clearer
Of effects and of cause.

We say, "All was created,"
Forgetting e'er to add,
That none was ever sated
Unless he hunger had;
In other words, that changing
A thing, creation means;
That nature, e'er arranging,
On laws eternal leans:

That stars do come and vanish,
Much larger than the earth;
That God doth aid or banish,
Where there's a break or dearth.
He takes and gives forever,
And ne'er his stores exhaust,
And man, who thinks he's clever,
Doth feel forlorn and lost.

We feel forlorn and saddened
When He calls for his own,
Forgetting how he gladdened
Us with His finite loan.
For loaned are all possessions,
Our body and our mind;
And love and kindred passions
Us to our Maker bind.

When signs, grim woe portending,
Accost us in our way;
When grief our heart is bending,
We usually pray.
When joy doth pass our portals,
Us with the best to treat,
We oft forget — weak mortals —
Our prayers to repeat.

The prayer which God pleases,
Which He holds in esteem,
The one is, which ne'er ceases
To flow like a clear stream;
Unuttered, though, and hidden,
It reaches God before
The prayer, ordered, bidden,
Doth reach the chapel door.

'Tis human to petition
When dire need doth press;
But 'tis an exhibition
Of purest selfishness,
If we, in happy hours,
Forget the due we owe,
Forget the kindly powers
From whom each boon doth flow.

The prayer which commendeth,
Wherever it may rise,
Us unto Him, who sendeth
The best as a surprise,
Is that which seeks no favors,
No profits, and no gains,
But thankfully life's flavors
Accepts and entertains.

To pray for self, evinces
A narrow, sordid mind;
Therefore, true spirit-princes
Therein no solace find,
As long as others suffer
Far greater woes than they,
They strive, unlike the puffer,
Their fellow's grief to stay.

A meteor hath landed,
(All things are apt to fall)
My ignorance demanded:
"Whence from, thou shapeless ball?"
Then spoke the hardened boulder:
"A world was once destroyed
As large as earth, and older,
Which me as part employed.

"There was I sand and gravel,
And changed to soil in time —
In living germs to travel,
My atoms found sublime.
Sojourning in the flowers
They found a lodging place,
In creatures of great powers,
My atoms ran a race.

"At last again, creation
Changed me to what I am.
Before conglomeration
My atoms thus did cram
They were a restless rabble,
Each followed its own mode,
Some in the brooks would babble,
While others did corrode.

"They sleep now, and are resting,
And when they wake, they can
And will be manifesting
New traits in shortest span.
They go where they are bidden;
They come when they are called;
Behind them, He is hidden,
He who all things installed."

Scarce had the last word ended,
I forthwith pulverized
A fragment loose, extended,
And swallowed it, surprised;
For thoughts came o'er me thronging
Of a related world
Which hath, to still my longing,
A message hither hurled;

A message of destruction,
  Of birth again to come;
My powers of deduction
  Were stunned and staggered some.
Commingling and entwining
  Beneath my girdle's space
Were two worlds' parts, combining
  To run another race.

These parts, one representing
  An epoch past, forsooth!
The other one augmenting
  The value of its youth.
Yet, to my awe and wonder,
  No weakness me engaged;
Exhaustion, brings youth's thunder,
  And strength, the wine, if aged.

Thus have I had an inkling
  Of how God doth evolve
The stars and worlds e'er twinkling,
  And other problems solve.
Why should not mind, its fetter
  Break 'neath His potent touch?
And why should man be better
  Than beast or bird, or such?

Why should God, the eternal,
  In kindly care e'er cease?
And not for every kernel
  Its sphere of growth increase?
If matter doth forever
  Endure and live and thrive,
Why should the mind's endeavor
  Be lost in nature's hive?

Why should a single vision,
  Or thought or act e'er die?
Why should — I waive precision —
  God's gifts not multiply?
Is spirit not the highest,
  The gift I'd "treasure" call?
Why brother, thou denyest
  Thyself the best of all.

If matter, after resting,
  Again with zeal resumes,
If space or time molesting
  No single atom dooms,
Why should death or stagnation,
  God's breath, thy mind, defy?
Take heart, and contemplation
  Will echo, "Why, ah, why?"

And if the cosmoplastic
  And ever restless dust,
E'er pliable, elastic,
  Can leave a shattered crust,
And join a system whither
  God did its weight project,
Why should the soul not thither
  Its onward steps direct?

Why should the soul, migrating
  From star to star, not find
A knowledge, slowly sating
  The yearnings of the mind?
Is not the soul more subtle,
  Of a more lasting mold,
Than dust, which in life's shuttle
  Doth deathless traits unfold?

Not for — nor backward seeing
Nor sure of aught to-day,
We falsely judge each being
And misconstrue God's way.
We grasp at straws, while mountains
To shelter us are prone,
And often miss light's fountains
Which flow for us alone.

If one, perchance more gifted,
Sees deeper than the rest,
We say, "Poor man; he's drifted
From reason's high bequest."
And yet, although in error
Full nine of us remain,
The tenth, to us a terror,
The truth may entertain.

Thou sayest, my dear brother,
"Man is the central fact.
He's traits found in no other
Thing which us could attract.
His claims no bluff nor twisting
Of facts can e'er dispute;
God did all things existing
For mankind institute."

Alas, these are old tenets,
A human, selfish plan;
Though man exists on planets,
Yet, planets can spare man.
Nor was the rosebud given
To tempt thee to admire;
The rose can thrive, has thriven,
Despite man's love or ire.

The rose her charms acquired
  Where thou thy strength hast gained,
Where songbirds, gay, admired,
  Their tuneful lays obtained.
Not one, its need fulfilling,
  Infringes on the rest,
Each one, unconscious, stilling
  Its wants on nature's breast.

Of intellect thou pratest,
  And "soulless" call'st the brute?
O brother, how thou hatest
  To own but half the truth.
A single round in speeding,
  Thou art ahead no more,
Upon the ladder leading
  To heaven's changing shore!

'Tis heaven which, e'er progressing,
  No stop knows, and no pause;
Where deeper insight's blessing,
  For joy gives ample cause;
Where none his fellow-leader
  Doth envy or impeach,
Where each one is the pleader
  Of all, and all for each;

Where each again looks higher
  With yearning for the best,
And, led by warm desire,
  Seeks knowledge, but not rest;
Where each as now is groping
  Far from the fountain-head
But when, with darkness coping,
  By greater light is led;

Where light, forever glowing,
A brighter hue attains,
And all that lives, though growing,
Still far from God remains;
Where unknown senses gather
Joys, which man must forego;
Since earthly means are rather
Deficient, weak, and slow;

Where peace and concord swelleth
Each heart, near truth's high peak;
Where love eternal dwelleth,
And none need shelter seek;
Where less evolvèd creatures
Are yet with thee in line
To strive towards Him, whose features
Are love and truth divine;

Where beings of all stages
From violet to man,
Each cheerfully engages
To bloom, to work, or plan;
Where each finds its fruition,
In deed, or dream, or thought;
Where each in wise division
Of tasks, God's wonders wrought:

There, brother, is the heaven,
Which no stagnation knows,
Where rest is but the leaven
Which growth brings and bestows.
There too, the lowly flower,
Now wilting in the sun
May gain, and in an hour
Of grace, us may outrun.

If we, in scorn, unheeded,
Our conscience's warning left,
Which, with us ever pleaded,
But found of sense bereft,
Then may we fear and falter,
For conscience is God's voice,
And retrogression's halter
May bind us — and rejoice.

Of intellect, examples
In insect, bird, or beast
We find. And in the temples
Where pagans used to feast,
There man himself degraded
And fell beneath the brute,
Who ne'er in virtue traded,
Nor self did thus pollute.

Thus do we see, the higher
God does a being call,
The lower, vain desire
May drag it in its fall;
And that the lower creatures,
Less gifted in a way,
Are more immune from features
Which them might lead astray.

Yet are all creatures sharing
With us, love, joy, and pain;
Hope, faith, and grim despairing
They all must entertain.
A dog may die from mourning
For him whom he did serve,
And yet proud man is scorning
His claims, with dauntless nerve.

All things are good, and shelter
God gave to all, until
Man did begin to welter
In blood, and maim and kill,
Not only that required
To live in comfort, ease,
But God's forbearance tired
By slaying man's increase.

By ruthlessly destroying
What he could not consume,
With sacred laws e'er toying
Usurped the right to doom
All that which force could smother,
Which cunning could compel,
Producing endless bother
Where peace alone should dwell.

The weed, the insect hated,
Have claims as good as we,
For all things are related
In life's e'er-changing sea.
The life that crowns the highest,
Doth in the lowest weave,
And what thou "one" denyest
The "whole" has to retrieve.

Though hardship, woe, or sorrow
May a chastisement seem,
It hastens on the morrow
The dawn of brighter gleam.
It brings the insight nearer,
For which the wise are known;
A chastened mind sees clearer
To find and hold its own.

A chastened heart amasses
Within its widening walls
The wealth despised which passes
And undiscernèd falls
From those who worship blindly
But dross and empty sounds,
While in their reach the kindly
And lasting love abounds.

A chastened spirit falters
Not, when the twilight ends,
And night to darkness alters
All that which God us lends.
The day in twilight ending
Doth likewise, too, begin;
What God's one hand is spending
The other taketh in.

These are my views, dear brother,
Which in the stress of years
Which threatened me to smother,
Did crystallize, 'mid tears.
I prayed for help external —
God gave me peace instead;
I prayed for chaff — the kernel
I found before me spread.

I prayed in childish urging
For that which I did crave,
When sorrow's billows, surging
Within my heart, did rave.
Unanswered these petitions
Did seemingly remain;
And yet, despite omissions,
The balance shows but gain.

I prayed for lost possessions —
  They were refused, denied;
Yet, through my purgèd passions
  I greater wealth espied.
The object of my seeking
  I could not find nor see,
Still God's voice, kindly speaking,
  Hath truer guided me.

END OF PART I

MY OWN PHILOSOPHY

Part Two

'Tis hard, and not easy of solving,
To prove that all things do exist;
Yet harder by far, 'tis to reason
That all is but shadow and mist.

We either were naught, and are nothing,
And shall end like a void never seen;
Or, we are, and have been, and shall flourish,
When change shall remove this life's screen.

Even dreams and illusions which dwindle
When the feverish brain doth relax,
Must have a foundation for building
Their structures, which us often tax.

For how could a lifeless thing fancy
That it lives, and of life's joys partakes?
How could it exist, an illusion,
Which never its yearning thirst slakes?

We scarcely the truth's rim are grasping
Which loometh beyond our ken,
And blinded by rays of light's splendor
We learn not the "why" nor the "when".

Yet see we the wide-open pages
In which He His runes doth inscribe,
And hearing His breath in each rustle,
We part of truth's glory imbibe.

The swell of the wave in the ocean
  In fathomless language sounds,
And the firmament's purple splendor,
  A tale of deep meaning expounds.

The darkness and light in their changes
  Their prearranged tasks do fulfil,
And Orion's far-away twinkle
  Adds eloquence, though all is still.

He speaks not in words nor in figures,
  Yet reaches the soul of each thing;
In a fitting and suitable manner,
  A message to each He doth bring.

Unquestioned by Turk and by pagan,
  Admitted by Christian and Jew,
Is the doctrine that space has no limits;
  There's no void which it doth not subdue.

  And since of necessity endless,
  It also the endlessness proves
Of him who life's chain keeps in motion,
  Which ceaselessly onward moves.

His laws, one another perfecting,
  Are the fruit of a sole intellect;
In the largest and smallest of beings,
  We always their oneness detect.

All matter combined is His body,
  And the sum of all spirit, His soul;
He's ever the end and beginning
  Since He is the all and the whole.

And thou who dejected art creeping,
  Tormenting thyself in great fear,
Art part of the whole, and rejoicing
  Shouldst fill thy e'er-altering sphere.

And he, whose vain pride and ambition
  Owneth no God but himself,
Should ponder, for changes advancing
  Shall strip him of pride and of pelf.

Change checkless, rest ever refusing,
  On time in his labors doth lean,
And space unconfined and unfathomed,
  Each a part in His faithful machine.

Change ushers in fruits which time ripens,
  Some bitter, some more or less sweet,
And at the same moment obscureth
  The past in her headlong retreat.

Change is the one mainspring which wonders
  Performs in each moment of time,
And time is the pall and the cradle,
  Of the commonest and the sublime.

Time, known as the ruthless destroyer,
  Doth also bring joy, all to cheer.
He is but the tool and the servant
  Of the ruler confined to no sphere.

Time, endless like space, we do measure
  By counting the mile-stones of change,
Without which the conscious wayfarer
  Would yield to despair in his range.

We designate Him as all-knowing,
And justly so, since He is all,
And the whole, which in space e'er existeth
And hath but His own to install.

The thought which thy spirit enlightens
Is a spark from the ocean of fire
Which guideth unerring each member;
And doth to its fountain retire.

In the touch of the deep-delving mole
He feeleth His own pulse-beat,
And thine eye, which the light doth perceive,
Is a part of His sight complete.

Thy standpoint permits but few glimpses,
And yet, He doth know each detail,
For His are the eyes of all beings
Which, jointly observing, ne'er fail.

Though thine and the warbler's ear differ
To Him they convey the one sound,
Which He doth bring forth through His organs,
Which limitless ever abound.

Emotions, deep hidden, yet vital —
Since naught e'er existed in vain —
In thee, or the lowest of beings,
He implanted, and doth entertain.

Each hair which upon thee is growing
Is part of thyself, we concede,
And yet may thy coming-on baldness
Respect in thy fellow's minds breed,

Provided each hair thou art losing
  Is replaced by a worthier gift,
Which causes the eye thee observing
  From the good to the better to shift.

Each part is a dot or a trifle
  Which often the whole could forego,
And yet is each atom essential
  When nature her gifts doth bestow.

To perceive every side of an object
  A single sense always doth fail,
And eyesight, smell, hearing, and feeling,
  Combined, may not even prevail.

Yet He, of whom each a small part is,
  Hath organs, uncounted, unknown,
And knowing the truth unreserved
  To Him, is possessing His own.

Parts are but parts, and can only
  With other parts make up a whole,
And the soul in each separate being
  Is a part of the Universe's soul.

Thy heart and thy spine seem unconscious
  That each is a portion of thee;
Yet thy mind, which grave problems is weighing
  Without them would powerless be.

This proves that the body and spirit
  In completing each other are one,
And that, when the life-tie is severed
  They part, but are never undone.

And the life-soul from matter delivered
  Returns to its own fountain-head,
From whence it, new cycles beginning,
  Seeks realms where new truth-rays are shed.

While the truths of the past are forgotten,
  New senses us other truths show,
Which in turn, when these organs are failing,
  Must vanish and fade like the snow.

A life everlasting demandeth
  That the vanished forgotten should be,
And the future obscureth and hidden,
  Till change lifts the veil, and we see.

Could the past, like a specter approaching
  Upon us, its mirror-light shed,
Could the future its storehouse exhibit,
  The present alone would be dead.

Two brothers, alike in appearance,
  And schooleth and nourished the same,
Do often compare with each other
  As a spark with Vesuvius' flame.

This proves that the past, though forgotten,
  Left traces within the life-soul
To equalize which would require
  Eons, not years, to unroll.

But virtue and sin counteracting
  The distance can swiftly reduce,
If one chooses prudently, wisely,
  While the other, his gifts doth abuse.

Though senses are needed in forming
The thought which the mind entertains,
Yet thoughts are proportioned to tally
With the aptness which in the soul reigns.

Capacity first is required,
Before we can fully digest
Perceptions which either sense gathers;
This is the soul's only bequest.

From cycle to cycle advancing,
Capacity grows or declines,
And the more of the world-soul thou ownest,
The brighter God's light on thee shines.

If a hair should be lost by a kitten,
'Twould still an abundance possess,
And the Earth, if destroyed in a moment,
Would weaken the All even less.

Yet Man, ever frail and unstable,
Despising his brother, the dust,
Claims all that his eye is surveying
As a prey for his power and lust.

But the dust which to-day he despiseth,
To-morrow a part is of him,
And the mind, likewise changing and fleeting,
May be weakened or filled to the brim.

These changes, to mankind so vital,
Affect not the All and the Whole,
And the soul to-day clouded and fearing,
All doubt may to-morrow control.

Like a child who is trimming the ringlets
  Surrounding her countenance gay,
The Deity, too, is a pruning
  His own, when a world doth decay.

But decay which is seeming destruction,
  Is "beginning" as truly as "end";
Is a part of each change-ruled cycle,
  Which receiveth again all to spend.

Decay and life's growth are illusive,
  And "upward" and "downward" are naught —
These terms are but makeshifts, emerging
  From the limited channels of thought.

What seemingly reaches the zenith,
  Returns in the end to its source,
Which, too, is the source of all other;
  Great problems, man meets in his course.

The small thing seems large to the smaller,
  And the large, to the larger appears
As a dwarf of its kind. But the Godhead
  To Equality's standard adheres.

To Him Who the truth is in person,
  All things are in value the same,
The low weighs as much as the highest,
  And the smallest is small but in name.

"Equality" is the earth's slogan,
  And likewise the law of the All;
Each atom of mind and of matter,
  Doth ward off the fate of the thrall.

An atom, to-day in the mire,
  May reach, through the root of a tree,
The crown, and the blossom there blooming,
  To be wafted again to the sea.

And the greatest of minds from the lowly,
  In all the past ages did spring,
While the high-born fell back to the level
  Which "Equality's" merits doth sing.

But why should I cut my own finger,
  Or cripple myself, as I would
By nursing one limb above others —
  Are they not all equally good?

Since each thing is yearning for justice,
  And each is a part of the all,
The God, who His own e'er preserveth,
  No hardship would vainly install.

My foot may be craving protection,
  My hand may be sorely in need,
While another part also divested,
  For speedy assistance doth plead.

Yet may I, whose planning includeth
  Each part of myself — of the whole —
Reject all these prayers, providing
  A more needy part with its dole.

Thus the whole, which as God we do honor,
  Sees clearer the needs of each part,
And provideth in wisdom and justice,
  At the most proper time, ev'ry heart.

Yet He, like His parts, which are human,
Can resort to the knife, to remove
A boil or a cancer ingrowing,
If the Whole He can thereby improve.

An insect which in the moss dwelleth,
Finds shelter and food in its folds,
And the moss to a stately tree clinging,
A home, and its safety beholds.

The tree, which upon the earth prospers,
Finds all that it needs in the soil;
And the earth, by the sun-rays enlivened,
Finds strength, ever onward to toil.

The sun in his turn feels impulses
Which keep him from going astray,
And he filleth his place in the household
Whose staircase we call "Milky Way."

And the Milky Way's cluster dependent
On clusters of a similar kind,
Which fathomless space keeps in hiding,
In God its propeller doth find.

Thus we see, each being dependeth
On another one's surplus strength,
And whoever this grade-way doth follow,
Will surely reach God at length.

The Bible, they say, was inspired,
And the Koran, through Gabriel's aid,
Directly from Heaven was handed,
Profaner's doubts thus to evade.

The Vedas, still older, are claiming,
As author, the Deity's hand,
And many a Pagan hath doctrines
Which highest respect do command.

To me it is clear, all impulses
Which we should transform into deeds,
Are inspired by Him who well knoweth
His own, with its hopes and its needs.

The thoughts which come over me crowding,
God thinks in the brain I call mine,
I only interpret, and feebly
My efforts His wishes define.

Whoever God-given impulses
In cowardly fear doth subdue,
Doth curtail the growth of his life-soul,
Doth weaken where he should renew.

The bravest who heed their own conscience,
Count lightly abuse and all pain;
Not even the cross and its torture,
The true in their course can restrain.

But the sacrifice which they thus offer,
Outweighs in its worth, a whole span
Of faint — and of half-hearted virtue
Which follows the fashion of man.

Reformers inspired, are courting
The hatred and envy of those
Who, ready made doctrines embracing,
In the bosom of ease repose.

Each epoch new needs must encounter,
  Which urgent new thoughts do demand,
And armed with God's wisdom and patience,
  The sage in the foreground must stand.

The prophet who fears not, nor falters,
  Inspired thought ably doth voice,
And the miser, who hoards up his treasure,
  Like a convict doth act, without choice.

E'en murder may, too, be inspired,
  And death is not always a loss,
And the stroke which is felling a brother,
  To the striker, may show his soul's dross.

The principle we are defining,
  As "bad" seems to be of some use
To bring out the good in all nature —
  The true, with new zeal to infuse.

I'd dare not the wisdom to question,
  Which alloweth the bad to exist;
Since good comes from evil, if rightly
  We approach this antagonist.

They tell us our life on this planet
  Is a kind of a primary school,
Wherein we prepare for the heaven
  Where bliss, never ending, doth rule.

But instead, 'tis plain to the thinker
  Who hearsay doth scorn to repeat,
Who scans but the balance of knowledge;
  That everywhere life is complete.

Eternity is but a circle
On which we are speeding ahead;
And its center is equal in distance
From the living as 'tis from the dead.

No "to-morrow" this circle encounters,
And "yesterdays" never have been;
And the primer which leads to perfection
Is boundless without and within.

The eras which we try to measure
The days which we count and pass by,
Are as close to the end which ne'er cometh,
As the imagined beginning is nigh.

Eternity's, therefore, the present,
Which never began, nor can end,
Which we are dividing in epochs,
Our faulty conceptions to mend.

If God were forever creating,
(Not changing, as I herewith claim)
Things, always destruction defying,
Plethora would everything maim.

And say some, "Creation not endless
Will cease when the measure is filled,"
But pray, why create when plain changing
Can all things annul or rebuild?

And why is the world not a growing?
But altered each moment or span,
If matter is free from destruction,
Explain this to me, he who can!

Wherefore should we need a redeemer,
  Whom the less gifted brute must forego?
If sinful our nature and selfish,
  What availeth all self-blinding show?

Whatever one's joy is abridging,
  What lessens our virtue's high aims,
What we may unjustly from others
  Withhold, is a sin which us shames.

But senses we have, unless sated
  In a godly and natural way,
Will prey on the rights of their brothers
  And lead us, alas, far astray.

Sin is but the touchstone of virtue,
  And as long as our senses exist,
Will thrive and prevail in a measure —
  Will us in vain doings enlist.

A world where all beings are senseless,
  Could never of sin be accused;
But gifted and highly developed,
  Truth's organs are easy abused.

Small credit there is to be sinless
  Where never temptations assail;
Where light is a-shining the brightest,
  The clearest-cut shadows prevail.

  With senses all dulled and decaying,
  Enfeebled, too weak to do wrong,
'Tis easy to preach and to practice
What otherwise graces the strong.

The higher the mind is upreaching,
  The lower it falls, if it falls, —
In striving for lofty ideals —
  In heeding the voice which each hails.

Redemption must come from recesses
  Of the innermost soul, where God dwells,
Where shams and deceit are not potent —
  From the home of both heavens and hells.

If the earth a Redeemer required,
  Who of God is the only true son,
Who shall in the stars and the planets,
  Correct what in sin was begun?

Or must we believe that all other
  Universe dots like the earth,
Are neglected, condemned, and forsaken,
  By him who doth curtail each dearth?

And who will redeem the vast numbers
  With whom ancient times have been crammed?
Or is there a saving reaction
  Out-blotting past woes of the damned?

A primary need is religion
  To man, who e'er searches and gropes,
And his needs are as unlike and varied,
  As are all his standards and hopes.

The one seeks and finds consolation
  By scourging his flesh with great zeal,
While another his spirit doth chasten,
  His yearning soul's ailings to heal.

And there one gives aid to the needy,
  Receiving his well-earned reward,
And praying, or chanting sweet carols,
  The Poet enlarges his hoard.

Like Emerson's circles, Religion
  Embraces the large and the small,
And each for his calibre seeketh
  A suitable faith to install.

The giant, whose mind ever soaring,
  O'erleaps what can stay but the thrall.
And the pigmy lives up to his measure
  By trying in darkness to crawl.

If each does the best in his power
  With the gifts in his reach and command,
No blame should his striving e'er darken,
  Nor vainness his self-love expand.

To God, all is good that existeth,
  He despiseth not efforts well meant,
E'en though like a snail one is creeping,
  His time is not wasted, misspent.

The clergy, if true, and not shamming,
  Believing the doctrines they teach,
Are surely God's foremost exponents,
  Whose life-work, none e'er should impeach.

'Tis vain to claim, he who doth differ
  From thee, is a lie or a fraud,
Since the erring would soon be enlightened,
  If such were the planning of God.

Progress, with no forces opposing,
In sloth and stagnation would end,
Since e'er contradiction the spur is
Mistakes and misuses to mend.

And the low, like the high, need a leader
To show them all that they can see;
For me is the path of restriction,
And the broad and exalted, for thee.

One finds in the Bible salvation,
Another the Koran holds dear.
A third pins his faith to a trifle,
Exciting the scoffer to sneer.

But doctrines and books are inventions
Begotten to serve for a day,
And like all that's coming and going,
They end in the trail of decay.

The sage who the stars tries to follow,
Has a book much more likely to last,
And yet he seeks vainly to fathom
God's forces, undying and vast.

God's forces, renewing each other,
Are neither in books, nor the skies
Completely revealed, but foreshadowed
For guiding the mind of the wise.

We learn by what little perception
Makes clear for the striving thought,
That the seemingly unsurpassing
Is surpassed by the truth, if sought.

We learn that between the shadow
And the sun an object stands,
Since the one implies the other,
And our vision thus expands.

And the more our vision is growing,
The richer grows the field
Where inexhaustible treasures
Their stores to insight yield.

Each sees but as far as the orbit
Of his vision, confined and small;
And each has a world which no other,
Can also his kingdom call.

The one, with great zeal doth endeavor
But material wealth to gain;
While another strives, ever untiring,
Love's promptings to entertain.

And a third, who despises emotions
And earthly possessions shuns,
May yield to a force which compelleth
And follows the paths of the suns.

Each finding the task of his choosing,
Or rather, to him assigned,
And directed by instincts unerring,
Another truth grasps with his mind.

Each rules in his sphere undisputed,
To cherish what others despise,
To gather the wealth which none claimeth,
Which solely for him did arise.

God's high-priests, the Poets and Prophets,
To whom He Truth's outskirts unveils,
Get glimpses amid mind's travailing
Perceiving where man's judgment fails.

But fools, who the new are abhorring,
And by usage are bound to the past,
In Christ, as in others, discovered
A danger to all they possessed.

And raging in thoughtless delusion,
The crown of a martyr they fling
On the brow of their victim, thus giving
His teachings their undying wing.

The fool, like the sage, has his uses,
And a most willing tool at all times
Is he. While the pain-racked Reformer
Despairing, his pedestal climbs.

"Equality's" forces, ne'er resting,
United with "Change" will redeem
In time, all the errors of folly,
And curb proud ambition's vain dream.

And Hope shall not prove a delusion,
And Love shall its circles extend,
Outreaching e'en space, the unfathomed —
And this, for to-day, is

THE END.

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